

THE BOY CAPTIVE



OF THE TEXAS MIER
EXPEDITION

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



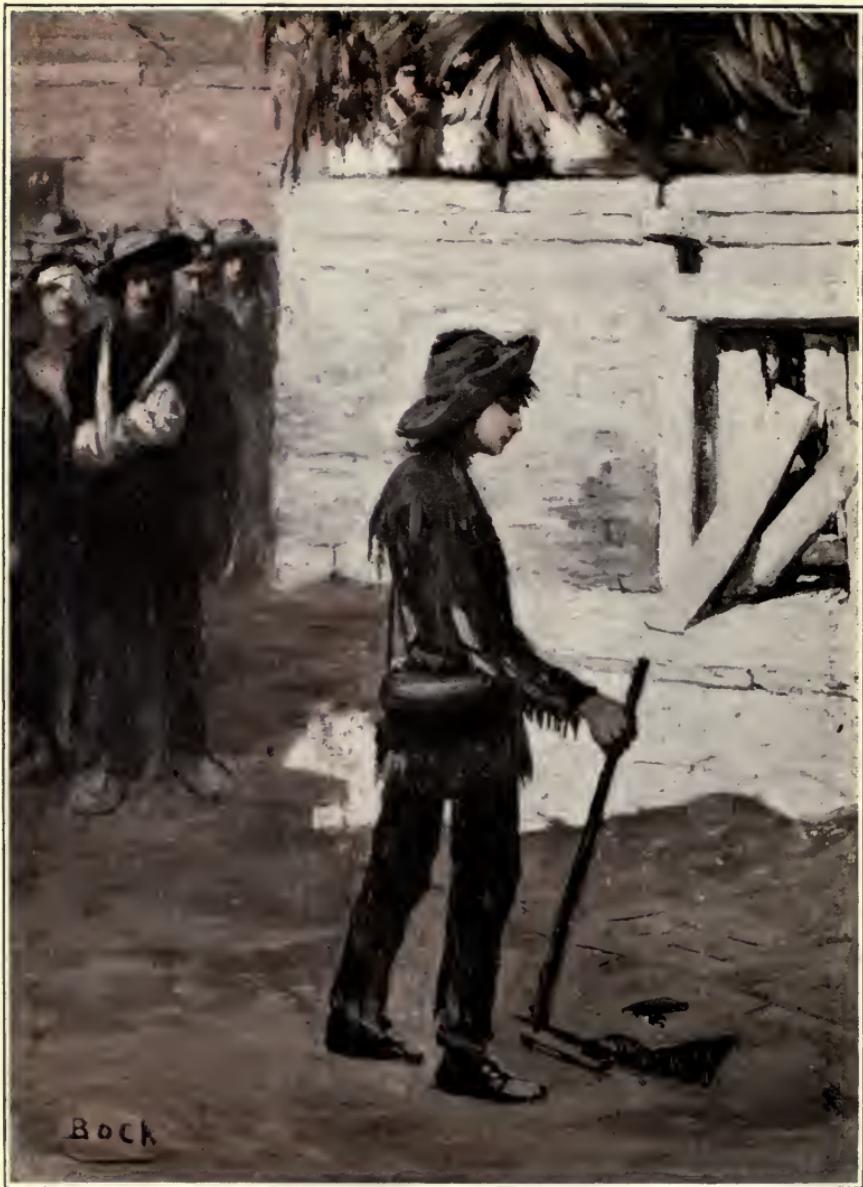
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ROBERT ERNEST COWAN

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D
dear friend
Sir -

Samuel de la Fréte
whose memory is most
cleverly translated & by a
eloquent friend, that

most truly yours
Tom Chambers Galveston
1818 [unclear]



Painting by Bock

"I've kept my promise"

THE BOY CAPTIVE OF THE TEXAS MIER EXPEDITION

BY
FANNY CHAMBERS
GOOCH-IGLEHART.



Author of
"Face to Face With the Mexicans," "Christmas in Old Mexico,"
and other Short Stories, Sketches and Essays

Revised, Reprinted and Republished by the Author

Illustrations by Bock

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Very truly yours.
Fanny Chambers Cook Gilhart

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DEDICATION.

It has been my purpose herein to portray the dramatic and picturesque story of the young Texas lad who was the hero of the fated Mier Expedition. That was a stern and stressful period, and one lit by revolutionary fires, in which men, women and children bore a part. It is, therefore, fitting that this volume should be affectionately dedicated to the pioneer mothers and fathers who early espoused the cause of Texas independence, and through their superior courage, energy and intelligence won the priceless treasure of this Great Southwestern Empire.

This book is affectionately inscribed to Mrs. Rebecca Gilleland Fisher, who, as a child of six years, was rescued from the Indians by Albert Sydney Johnson as one who lived the life herein portrayed.

279341

PREFATORY NOTE.

The stirring scenes and events as chronicled in these pages were but the outcome of the border contiguity of the Latin and Anglo-Saxon races, and the struggle of each for supremacy. No unnatural conditions existed, but Latin ownership and occupancy of the coveted territory for several centuries, made their aggression to them a matter of just and righteous enterprise. The Anglo-Saxon, a newly constituted power, claimed the right to overthrow the Latin and take possession of his territory, and thus, moved on the bitter feud and contention. What is known in Texas as the Mier Expedition is only one of the many bitter episodes forming a successful issue in the possession of Texas.

In the preparation of the romantic and picturesque life of John C. C. Hill, a boy of thirteen years of age, he having been an integral part of the Mier Expedition. it has become necessary to recount the mishaps and misfortunes of the more tragic parts of this Expedition. In doing so, the author has had no desire whatever to arouse a feeling of bitterness or antagonisms upon the part of either the Mexicans or the Texans, for her sympathies have been deeply enlisted upon each side of the question. The wrongs and mistakes, if any, as carried forward by both sides at the time, have passed far down upon the receding pages of history, and not one person lives today who participated in this affair. Each opposing element did what it felt was right at the time; succeed-

ing generations will judge fairly and justly the merits of both sides.

With Christmas of 1910, will be recorded the 68th anniversary of the siege of Mier, and in this auspicious year is being celebrated the great centennial of Mexican Independence. Border complications have ceased to exist and a firm and lasting friendship has long since been established not only between Mexico and the United States, but Texas, the old time enemy and erstwhile colonial dependency of that grand commonwealth, is now a good friend whose citizens, in large numbers, take up their residence successfully in that country. Such unexpected possibilities could only have been achieved by that great hero, patriot and Statesman, General President Porfirio Diaz, to whom has been given the power to redeem and save his country and representatives from the whole world have been invited to come within his broad domain and assist in celebrating one of the most remarkable and perfect successes in nation-building, known to modern man. In the brief space of thirty-two years has all this been achieved, and General Diaz has accomplished, in brief space mentioned, what it would have required 100 years in any other country.

The Author of this story who has recorded the scenes and events nearly three quarters of a century past, begs to extend her heartiest felicitations to General Diaz and his brave and patriotic people in the wonderful advancement made.

Respectfully,

THE AUTHOR.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

In connection with this story, readers of this book will appreciate and enjoy the beautiful drawings and etchings of Mr. Charles Peter Bock, the gifted Texan artist and well known landscape painter. Mr. Bock is an American, of German parentage, born in Germany, and in every sense, is a true American. He was an honor graduate of the Art Institute of Chicago, and later travelled and studied in the various art centres of Europe; after which on his return to America he became a citizen of Texas, and he has elected with his brush to make known the beauties of the solitude of the semi-desert country lying between Dallas and the Staked Plains, and his landscapes painted in this isolated region are marvels of beauty, and with his brush he is showing a portion of Texas never before shown in art, and which will soon become a memory. San Antonio is soon to become the home of this accomplished artist.

To Dr. Alfredo J. J. Austin, an English physician who has resided at Mier for almost forty years, the writer is deeply indebted for photographs of scenes in and about Mier, and also for much valuable historical data, which has enabled the author to correct numerous errors which have been continuously published in histories referring to scenes which were enacted at this period.

To Mr. Frederic R. Guernsey, the able editor of the Mexican Herald, for much interest in the publication of this volume.

To Mr. Fenton R. McCreary, charge de affairs for the United States, now minister to Honduras, I am deeply indebted.

To Mr. Percy Cox, Mexico's great photographer, I am under obligations for photographs which I could not have otherwise obtained.

To the Reverend Fathers of the Cathedral, who gave Mr. Cox access to the Archbishop's Gallery, that he might obtain the portrait of the Archbishop Posado.

To Mr. W. F. McCaleb, and the Hon. Carlos Bee, of San Antonio, for many courtesies and also to the Hon. Enrique Ornelas, Mexico's Consul at San Antonio.

Engravings and etchings planned and executed by Mr. Frederic B. Wieners, Southern Division Manager Barnes-Crosby Company, San Antonio.

To the Press of Texas, and to the Superintendent, Principals and Teachers in the public and private schools of Texas, and to the Mothers Clubs throughout the State, for their generous recognition of this story.

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INTRODUCTORY
CHAPTER

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

THE Spanish flag has been called "the flag of gold and blood," but it might well be called "The flag of poetry and romance." Wherever it has waved it has been a magician's wand conjuring up brilliant scenes from the fairy-land of song and story.

La Huella de los Espanoles, (Footprints of the Spaniards), have traversed regions far and wide, extending from the far north to the last limit of *La Tierra del Fuego* (land of fire and heat)—the length and breadth of the Americas—but the significant fact remains that no matter in whatsoever country of the New World the Spaniard planted his footsteps, or wrote his *firma*, neither passing of centuries nor later occupation by the stronger Saxon race has been able to obliterate or dislodge them. The laws of these countries continue to be read in the original Spanish; the Castillian tongue is still spoken; the architecture retains its time honored place, and the cities, mountains, streams, trees, flowers, and shrubs still are known by their sweet, Spanish names.

Some of the wide expanse of territory conquered by the Spaniards in North America has been lost. This is true of Texas, Nevada, California, New Mexico, Arizona, half of Colorado, all of Utah, a part of the Indian Territory, and of Kansas. The Latin loves an even, warm climate, so that the more north-

ern portions of these provinces were never made the actual dwelling places of the early Spanish colonists, but in the southern portions Spain obtained the best results, and the history of these regions is replete with Spanish conquest and Mexican revolution.

The charm of the mystic spell which hovers over any country in which Spain has held dominion, lends and unfailing interest to those early Spanish regions of which Texas was once a part.

Permanency was given to the Spanish occupation of Texas about the year 1731, when by order of the King of Spain, four hundred families of the better class in the Canary Islands were bidden to establish the right of title of his Majesty, the King, to the province of Texas, known then as the New Philippines." But only about sixteen of these families responded to this call, consisting of about fifty-six persons. They landed at Vera Cruz, and proceeded slowly, taking many months, perhaps a year, over the long journey through Mexico to San Antonio. These were the first to erect homes and give an aspect of permanency to the settlement. Subsequent political developments placed the Anglo-Americans in possession of several Spanish countries. Among these was Texas, and in this domain the practical-minded American mingled with the romantic Spaniard.

Many states contributed to Texas men of iron will and exalted character, worthy of the citizenship of any country. The first was Moses Austin, who was a

native of Connecticut, but had lived for some time in Missouri, and hearing good accounts of the new territory in the southwest, conceived a plan for a colony. Stephen F. Austin, his son, organized and made this colony a success.

David G. Burnet, the first President of the Republic, was from New Jersey; Sam Houston, who, at San Jacinto struck the decisive blow which liberated Texas from Latin rule, a native of Virginia, had been Governor of Tennessee; Mirabeau B. Lamar, the poet President of the Republic, from Georgia; Anson Jones, the last President from Massachusetts. To their credit, be it said, that several distinguished Spanish and Mexican officers, united with the Anglo-Americans, and among them Lorenzo de Zavala, Ruiz, Navarro, and others who gave their best support to the liberation of Texas, and numerous others, under the general name of "Texans" united in throwing off the yoke of Latin domination, and Texas, when she decided to enter the Union, enjoyed the distinction of coming in, not through discovery, not through royal grant, not through purchase, not through conquest—but through the heroic efforts of her noble sons.

In February, 1837, Santa Anna had once again set foot on his own soil. No sooner had he been released by the Texans and returned to his own country, than he began scheming to regain his power. He organized a revolution and overthrew Bustamente, who

was then President of Mexico, and whom Santa Anna had, himself placed in power. With the reins of government once again in his wily hands, Santa Anna fixed his lynx eyes steadily on Texas, for he claimed after reaching his own country that having been a prisoner when he signed the treaty with Texas, he should not therefore be held responsible for this mistake. In his heart he had never really ceded the fairest and most fertile province of the Mexican Confederation, and now he began to harass the borders of Texas with petty incursions. In doing this, his motives were two-fold; he meant to deal a blow at the ambition of Texas, as a free and independent government; she should know that under no circumstances should she ever be regarded as other than a colonial dependency of Mexico; and, secondly, to the United States, he would give warning that any recognition on her part, of the claims of Texas, would be in open violation of the laws of nations, and would be inevitably followed by war. Emboldened by the knowledge that soon after the battle of San Jacinto, Texas had been denied entrance into the Federal Union, in the year 1842, he sent three of these invading parties into the Texas Country.

The Mier Expedition, with which the following story deals, was made into Mexican territory, in retaliation for these vengeful acts of Santa Anna.

Boys and girls who read this true story, will remember that when we speak of "Texan," it is an

American of the highest type, who espoused the cause of freedom and volunteered to come into this Indian-inhabited wilderness to help Texas.

SIX BRAVE BOYS.

These six beautiful, brave, young boys, of fine appearance, high ideals, and noble characters, all belonged to the finest families of the Republic.

John Christopher Columbus Hill, the youngest of these boys, less than thirteen, was from near La Grange, Fayette County, Texas; Orlando Phelps and Billie Reese were from Brazoria County; Gilbert Brush, Fort Bend County, Harvey Sellers, Fayette County, and Chris Yocum from Liberty, Texas; none exceeded 14 or 15 years of age. The nearness to the scene of the tragedy of the Alamo, which had occurred only six brief years before, had been an inspiration to every man and boy, and each performed the grave duties of men under the heaviest of trials with a heroism and a devotion to duty almost unknown in the annals of any country, which added lustre to the honor and glory of American manhood. Owing to the strange and romantic subsequent life of young Hill, he has naturally become the leading character in this story, but there was no mimic acting upon this great tragic stage, for the name of every individual mentioned in these chapters had a living identity.

Mr. John C. C. Hill, whose romantic life story is herein reproduced, was among men the most modest,

unassuming and un-herolike. The remarkable scenes and incidents which filled his young life, the great men into whose hands as a little prisoner he fell, their extreme kindness to him, caused him to feel in his later years that he wanted this story of his life to be placed in the hands of the children of Texas. Mr. Hill having read "Face to Face with the Mexicans," and knowing of the long and intimate association of its author with the people of Mexico, the writer of this story appreciated the privilege given her by Mr. Hill of receiving directly from himself the real story of a small boy while a prisoner in a foreign country. At the close of the full day which he passed with the author in her own home, going into the closest detail of the incidents of his youth, all of which have been carefully placed in their respective chapters. Mr. Hill turned his kindly face to the writer and said:

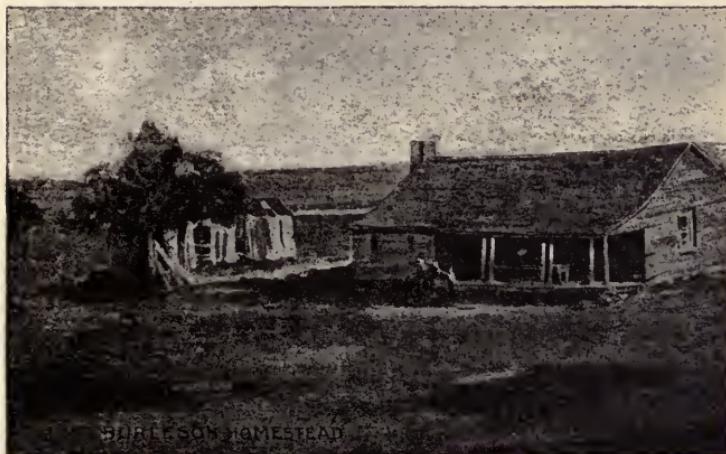
"When your book about Mier is finished, if I am not here, please tell this story to the children of Texas with my love." This is now my highest mission, and I give it to the people of Texas as well as the bright young children of this state with the hope of an approving audience, upon the subject of one of the most romantic and tragic military episodes known in the annals of Texas history, and the only small hero known among our many great ones.

In reading this story it must be borne in mind that the events which make it complete are told in the

easy pioneer fashion in which the English language was written and spoken at the period of the occurrences named. Small boys were not blessed with educational opportunities and the older ones spoke in the easy manner known to the pioneers.

Respectfully,

THE AUTHOR.



A YOUNG
VOLUNTEER

CHAPTER I.

A YOUNG VOLUNTEER.

THREE boys were playing "mumblety peg" on the ground in front of the house. One of them was tossing the knife, "Front palm, back palm, off the knee, break the chick—" but before they got the chicken's neck broken as known in the game—he and his companions were startled by the sound of galloping hoofs. They sprang to their feet in time to see, over the tall fence, the heads of a horse and a man, then the rattle of stones down the roadway, told of the swift descent to the ford.

The charms of "mumblety peg" fled with the horseman and with one accord, the boys raced through the open passage that divided the two rooms of the farm-house, and breathlessly joined the men at the corral. "Who was that? What did he want? Is it Injuns?" asked John, Mr. Hill's youngest son.

"No, it's Mexicans this time. Several hundred prisoners have been taken in San Antonio. Part of the Rangers were in town and are prisoners, but most of them were out scouting in another direction, when the Mexicans slipped into the city, and took possession without a fight. They didn't catch Jack Hays though, for one of the Rangers got away, and

headed the rest off before they ran into the trap. Captain Jack was down at Seguin, waiting for help. He has sent runners out in every direction; that was one of the Rangers!" said Mr. Hill.

"Are we going, father?" asked John.

"We!" said his brother Jeffrey, a manly young fellow. "Father and I are going, but we are not going to take any babies along with us to the war."

"I'm goin' too! Aint I, father?" The earnest young face looked up anxiously at the serious face of his father. "I'm not any baby; why its only a year since I rode to Austin by myself and recorded the deeds to father's property, didn't I, father?"

"Yes, my son, you did."

"Then I'm goin', too."

Jeffrey gave a derisive laugh: but James Monroe, the other brother, looked at his father, and waited for his answer. The two visiting boys, sons of one of the neighboring settlers, also listened with keen attention.

"I don't know——" said the father, taken by surprise. "It's just as your mother says."

"All right then, I'm goin'."

It was nearly sunset. The heavy line of timber that marked the river bank caught the light on its topmost twigs. The lower part was dusky. Shrill calls of jays hunting their leafy bed-chambers made the air noisy. Young mocking birds were practicing their vespers while the older ones were scolding and

chasing feathered trespassers from off their favorite roost. Big mule ear rabbits went loping through the long grass like (mimic) kangaroos, and their smaller brethren, the little "cotton-tails" were hunting their evening meal among the tender herbs. High against the fence the dusty weeds grew tall and rank, and battalions of sunflowers lined their golden shields all along the wagon trail that led up from the ford to the low log house that faced the river bottom.

From the rear of the corral came the low of the cow, for although relieved of their milk, they still lingered around the calf-pen trying to coax their offspring through the close cedar pickets to follow them to pleasant pastures.

But the little calves were safer in the pen; for the woods and the open prairie alike were filled with wolves. With the coming of dusk, fierce panthers would rouse themselves in their thirst and lie in wait for some smaller and weaker animal to satisfy their hunger. Clumsy bears with their shaggy cubs shambled through the bushes hunting for nuts and other delicacies. Fox and 'coon, 'possum and skunk waged war on the poultry, and the pack hounds that did guard duty often engaged in fierce battle with the marauders until the uproar of snarls and yelps and growls brought their human allies to the rescue with rifles. These were the conditions at the time of our story.

If the calves and poultry had many foes, so had the dwellers in the farmhouse, for this was the middle of September of 1842.

The farmhouse was the home of a Texas settler, Mr. Asa Hill, who brought his family from Georgia to the beautiful rolling prairie land near La Grange, Texas.

The little group of settlers of whom he was one had not only the wild beasts and reptiles of the wilderness to encounter. They lived ever in dread of wandering bands of Indians swooping down on their scanty herds of cattle or driving off their horses. The same tragedies of burning farmhouses and scalping the inmates, of carrying children and women into captivity, worse than death, were repeated here on these smiling praires with their grassy billows breaking against the scattered motts of timber, as two centuries before were enacted among the hills and valleys of rocky New England and the forest depths of Old Virginia.

The supper table was waiting under the sheltering roof of the open passage or hall. Simple and homely as it would seem at this day, its furnishings were far superior to the average settlers; for the Hills were of old colonial stock and although they had left many luxuries and comforts behind, they had brought their refinement with them. The supper cloth was scrupulously white and clean, and some few pieces of silver were interspersed among the plainer crock-



GEN. ED. BURLESON HOMESTEAD

HOME OF GEN. EDWARD BURLESON
A Typical Pioneer Home

ery. Everything that their farm did not supply had to be hauled in big freight wagons perhaps one hundred and twenty-five miles from Houston through the unsettled country; and these "freighter-wagons" were the especial mark for the Indians, whose depredations made the business of freighting a costly and dangerous venture.

Therefore when glasses got broken or cups and bowls grew scarce, gourds took their places. Easy of culture, various in shapes and of all sizes they were used as dippers, pans, pails, and baskets; two of them strapped on a horse made a very good substitute for trunk or satchel.

If the table furnishings were simple, the food was both plentiful and good. Deer were so numerous that the settlers had much trouble to keep them from destroying the crops; so venison was more common on the table than bacon. Prairie hen and quail whirred through long grass in every direction, and the pecan groves by the side of the river were noisy with the gobbling of wild turkeys. The negroes had brought the news of the Ranger's call when they brought in the milk, and Mrs. Hill and her daughters knew all the sad news. They watched the hungry men devour the hot venison steak in silence, half dreading to ask what they were almost sure of; that their men would answer the call for help.

Bacon and hominy vanished as by magic and the little darkeys were kept busy trotting back and forth

with relays of hot cornbread. A gourd loaded with transparent combs of amber honey was largely patronized by the small boys, and many gourds of buttermilk were necessary to quench their thirst.

The tallow candles threw their flickering light over the table and the shadows of the eaters danced grotesquely on the log walls hung with saddles and bridles, guns and powder-horns. Several large deer horns made excellent racks for the rifles. The dogs prowled restlessly around watching with eager eyes the hungry humanity at the board.

"Will you get off in the morning, father?" asked one of the girls.

"We'll be across the Colorado and nearly to Plum Grove before sunrise, won't we father?" declared John, with his mouth full of corn bread and honey.

"We!" said his mother. "You are not going to take that child, Asa? *You are not going, John!*" She laid her knife down and gazed with alarmed eyes at her husband.

"Well, he wants to go pretty bad," said Mr. Hill, looking at his plate, and avoiding his wife's eyes.

"It's my turn now, mother," said John cheerfully turning a beaming countenance upon her. "You know James Monroe had his chance at the Mexicans at San Jacinto and father has promised me over and over again that *the next war we had I could go.*"

"Well, he never dreamed that there would be another," said his mother.

"That don't make any difference, he promised just the same."

"You are too little——," began his little sister excitedly.

"Well," said John, sitting up erect and eyeing his sister beligerently, "I'd like to know who took the deeds to Austin? I'm some bigger than I was then."

An appreciative grin went around the table, save for poor Mrs. Hill who gazed at her youngest son with troubled eyes.

After supper the boys went out to see about the horses and the father and mother discussed the situation while Mammy Lou cleared the supper table. The mother urged the youth of the boy and his slender physique against the hardships and dangers of the expedition. Patiently and sympathetically the father listened and then he answered that the boy, though small, was no younger than others who had served in the war with Mexico. That it was time he was training for the life that every man had to face who made his home in a new country so beset with foes as was Texas. That it was better that he should make his first venture under the protection of his father and brother.

"O, Asa, he is so delicate looking! It is as bad as taking one of the girls!" said the anxious mother.

"Now, mother, *that* is just the reason that I would like him to go. He isn't any girl if he is as pretty as one. No boy of his spirit is going to stand being left

at home with the women. In a few years he will be for having a home of his own and then what will you do? You can't keep him tied to your apron strings many years longer! Best cut loose now. But do as you think best," he added kindly, "I won't interfere." Here the conversation ended.

Preparations for departure went briskly on. Guns were cleaned, bullets moulded, bowie knives sharpened, powder-horns replenished, water-gourds and blankets made ready, and all the saddles looked carefully over. John found a chance to whisper to his mother.

"You goin' to let me go, mother? I must go to take care of father and Jeff!"

His mother gave a faint smile as she looked at the eager face of the boy. How often she had said that to him when he was allowed to accompany them on some hunting trip.

"My son, I must take it to the Lord in prayer," was her answer and John said no more. Perhaps intuition told him that the prayer was to be more of resignation than entreaty, for he quietly made his preparation with the others. If his father noticed, he gave no sign, nor did either of his brothers make any remark. James Monroe took down a small rifle which he seldom used and cleaned it carefully. He had used it at San Jacinto and sometimes he allowed John to take it on a hunt. Perhaps he thought it would be well to have all the fire arms in readiness in case of an

attack by Indians, as he had to defend the family in the absence of his father and brother.

Long before the sun arose, while the sleepless mother lay upon her pillow, damp with tears, cautiously a little figure slipped into her room. The mother noticed the beseeching eyes and saw they had tears in them.

"Oh, mother. Do let me go!" he whispered. "I've got to go along to take care of father and Jeff!"

"I have prayed and prayed, my son, that God would give me wisdom to decide; and at last it seems to me that it would be best to let you go! I have the feeling that you may help your father and brother!" Mrs. Hill was a very religious woman and believed implicitly in the power of prayer. God alone knew the struggle she had undergone with her desire to shelter him from danger. But she believed she was following the commands of God in allowing this, her youngest son, to go to war.

John was overjoyed at the thought of going—and rushed out hurriedly to saddle his own fine little pony, "Jim Dandy." All his other preparations were made and even his mother caught a little of his enthusiasm; for John was of that magnetic temperament that affected everyone with whom he came in contact. His little sisters hung around him enviously and admiringly with their tear-filled eyes, and felt indeed, that it was a great thing to be a boy and go to war with men.

James Monroe came into the hall where his mother was sitting looking sadly at the busy scene.

"Well, mother! I came back from San Jacinto all right and I am going to give John my little rifle for luck. It is small, and he knows all about it." Calling John up he gave him the rifle saying:

"I carried this rifle at San Jacinto and it did good service; I'll give it to you now, since I can't go, and remember, its never to be surrendered to a Mexican."

The crowning touch of happiness was given. John felt himself indeed a man and straightening his little figure looked his brother in the eye and said:

"I'll remember. *No Mexican shall ever shoot this rifle.*"

As the small cavalcade rode down the trail that led toward Seguin, Jim Dandy was far in advance and the graceful little figure of the small rider turned once more to wave farewell to the dear mother and sisters who stood watching the party till they disappeared in the hazy distance of the Indian Summer morning.

"I shall never see him again," said Mrs. Hill sinking into a chair, as she gazed at the little group passing out of her sight. "That is just what you said when he took those papers to Austin all by himself. He is a man, mother, if sense and courage count. You said the Injuns would kill him, and the bears or panthers catch him; or else the wolves would eat him, or the Mexicans steal him; but instead he

rode the ninety miles all alone into Austin, recorded his papers as good as if he were fifty, had the best time he ever had, and came home as healthy as a young wild-cat."

"Well, he ought never to have gone. It was tempting Providence to send a twelve year old boy on a journey of ninety miles all alone in a country full of Indians," said his mother.

"Well, what made you let him go, mother? Father left it to you to say," said James Monroe, smiling significantly.

"I couldn't help myself. Something seemed to say 'Let John go!' besides when John wants anything, he's just got a way with him that would coax the birds off the bushes. He is so good and sweet that there isn't one of us who can bear to cross him."

"Well," said James Monroe reflectively, "I reckon he'll carry his gift right along with him, and if the Mexicans catch him, why I'll bet in twenty-four hours they'll be dancing to his tune. That little brother of mine was born to good luck, mother, and he's got a rifle, and that's better than luck. Say, there's a big flock of turkeys down in the bottom; they are after the pecans. I am going to get one for dinner."

OLD FOES AND NEW
TROUBLES

CHAPTER II.

OLD FOES AND NEW TROUBLES.

IT was bad news the ranger brought. He said that General Woll had entered San Antonio in command of about two thousand Mexicans, and finding the courts in session there, had taken as prisoners many of the more prominent citizens together with the officers of the court. San Antonio de Bexar was the largest as well as the oldest town in Texas, and it was also the nearest to the Mexican border; therefore it was the first to suffer. In the previous march, General Vasquez had swooped down on the unsuspecting town, securing much plunder and taking many prisoners, and was back over the border before the startled settlers fairly realized what had happened. Again in July another raid was made into the country at El Salado six miles southeast of San Antonio, but they were intercepted before much damage was done. The surrounding settlements became terrorized. Indians were enough without this menace hanging over their peace. The settlers on the Guadalupe fled eastward to the Colorado with their wives and children and their scanty household furniture. The men returned to cultivate their crops and to protect their posses-

sions from the depredations of marauding savages or wild beasts. The incursion of General Woll naturally caused much excitement and indignation among the Texans, and they resolved to follow the enemy to recapture their unfortunate friends, and retaliate upon the Mexicans wherever they found them. It was a noble ambition to attempt to rescue their friends who were held as prisoners and were now being marched away to unknown prisons. The Texans determined to make an effort to retaliate upon the Mexicans, and the regular army was reinforced by many volunteers, and General Houston gave the command to Adjutant General Sommerville.

After the affair at El Salado in July when the people contemplated revenge against the Mexicans, President Houston, through the newspapers of the day said: "The government will promise nothing but authority to march and furnish such supplies of ammunition as may be needed for the campaign. *They must look to the Valley of the Rio Grande for remuneration.*" The government will claim no portion of the spoils; they will be divided among the victors. The flag of Texas will accompany the expedition."

Later in October, President Houston's order to Brigadier General Sommerville, under date of Washington, Texas, Oct. 3, 1842, read:

"Sir—You will proceed to the most eligible point in the Southwestern frontier of Texas, concentrate



George Washington

with the force now under the command, all troops who may submit to your order, and if you can advance with the prospect of success, into the enemy's territory, you will do so at once. You will receive no troops into your command but such as will march across the Rio Grande under your orders, if required by you to do so. If you cross the Rio Grande you must suffer no surprise, but be always on the alert. You will be controlled by the most civilized warfare, and you will find great advantage of exercising great humanity towards the common people. In battle let the enemy feel the fierceness of a just resentment and retribution. You alone will be held responsible to the government, and sustained by its resources.

“I have the honor to be,

Your Obt. Servant,

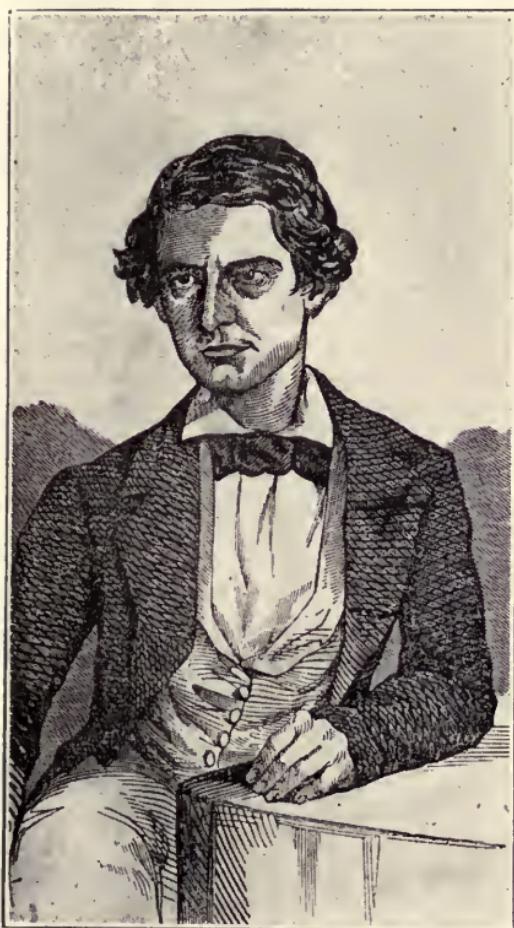
SAM HOUSTON.”

It is but a just tribute to the men who composed this expedition to say that they were of the highest character and enjoyed the confidence of all who knew them in their own country. They were patriots, tried and true, but ignorant of the language, habits, customs and powers of the enemy whom they were to meet and punish in his own country, with no artillery, and naught but their brave and determined efforts with their rifles, was a great and a serious undertaking.

Numerous expeditions have been recorded in the history of our great country, but most of them were

for the purpose of exploration or development. They have been rich in great results, the one thought of the explorers having been for the good that would come to the United States. But what is known in history as the "Mier Expedition" was purely for punishment and revenge. It seemed more than the new republic could bear, to begin anew the struggle to maintain her hard won independence.

Recognizing the necessity of such an organization, General Houston promptly authorized the dashing and gallant Captain Jack Hayes, a young surveyor living in San Antonio, to form a company of scouts whose business it should be to keep watch on the Mexicans as well as on the Indians. The headquarters of the brave band was in San Antonio, but they ranged the entire western border. Hayes, although very young, had won a name for his courage and good sense in fighting Indians, and the young men of the border were anxious to serve with him. In enlisting his men, he demanded that every man bear a good character for courage and honesty, be sober and own a horse that was worth not less than one hundred dollars; the last essentials showed his good sense, for there was much hard riding connected with the work and the lives of the men would frequently depend upon their being mounted on better steeds than the Indians. This was the beginning of the famous "Texas Rangers" under the republic, whose deeds are worthy to be sung by a Macauley or a Prescott.



The dashing and gallant Capt. Jack Hayes

When the Hills joined the other recruits at La Grange, from their little settlements, they were much annoyed to hear that another company of fifty men who were under Captain Nicholas Dawson, were twelve or fourteen hours ahead of them. It seemed that the news had reached them a little sooner for the reason that one of the young men of Plum Grove settlement was at Gonzales, where he and his father were gathering their corn. They were of one of the unfortunate families, who, abandoning their homes on the Guadalupe, fled to Plum Grove in the Colorado Valley, fifty miles away. Mr. Morrell was a Baptist minister, known throughout the country not only as a good man, but as a very brave one. He fought side by side with his neighbors when they had their terrible battle with the Comanches at Plum Creek. So he turned back promptly with Colonel Caldwell on hearing this bad news, and left his son to carry the news and the corn back home.

When John heard that Colonel Caldwell was also ahead of them, he fairly groaned, so sure was he that the Mexicans would be killed before he could get there to assist in their destruction. All along the trail the number of Texans was being increased by recruits who had received the warning given in pioneer fashion by repeating the blowing of a horn from settlement to settlement, and they pushed rapidly on.

In the meantime Captain Jack Hayes had a stroke

of luck. When he received warning that the Mexicans had again crossed the border, he sent two of the bravest of his men to Austin to get more ammunition. The road between Austin and San Antonio had no settlements, and it led through the Indian country. When he had to retreat to Seguin, he supposed that Wallace and Mallon would return to San Antonio the same way and the Mexicans would capture all the ammunition, as well as two of his most efficient scouts. Great was his joy to see them ride into Seguin a short time after he and his company reached there. They had come that way because they did not wish to risk fighting Indians, while loaded with a keg of powder.

The ammunition secured, Colonel Caldwell and Captain Hayes with their men moved promptly back toward San Antonio. They numbered about two hundred, but the Mexicans within the City were thirteen hundred strong, and also had several field pieces with them.

Unheeding the difference in numbers, Captain Jack resolved to draw them out for a skirmish; so he and six of his men rode up near the Mexican quarters as a challenge. They thought the cavalry would send out a small detachment to chase them, and it was their intention to decoy them toward the foot-hills some miles away, where, concealed by the mesquite, thirty or more of the Rangers lay in waiting. The plan succeeded, only instead of a few men, sever-

al hundred turned out, and a brisk chase followed. The little band in the mesquite managed to fall back and rejoin Caldwell. The Mexican cavalry circled around their hiding places, and then joined their own command, but not without losing several men by the deadly rifles of the concealed Texans.

Later in the day General Woll appeared on the prairie in the rear of the Texans. He was between them and their homes, and they knew that they must fight without waiting for further reinforcements. Colonel Caldwell was a member of the Texas and Santa Fe Expedition which left Austin May 1st, 1841, who had once been held prisoner by the Mexicans and had only been freed a short time previous, urged upon the men to fight, saying that he, if captured again, would be shot. Rev. Mr. Morrell, the minister, made a glowing speech that put heart and courage into them all, for they knew him to be a man of deeds and as brave as his words.

The Texans were sheltered behind the little foot-hills and the mesquite completely concealed them from view. The first shot of the enemy's cannon cut the twigs off the mesquite and sent a shower of leaves down on them, but did no further damage. It was followed by a burst of music from their band, then the glittering array of uniformed men advanced. Behind the hill the shabby unkempt men waited with rifles ready. Not until the enemy was within thirty feet did the Texans fire. The effect was terrible.

So many were killed that those in the rear would not advance any farther. For a short time the fighting lasted, the Mexicans suffering heavily, for they were fully exposed to the foe in ambush, their artillery was useless to them as it was directly in their rear and could not be trained on the Texans without raking their own ranks. Suddenly a horn sounded for retreat and the astonished Texans beheld their foes turn their backs in flight. Believeing it a ruse to draw them out of their shelter, they did not pursue them. A short interval of suspense and the artillery of the Mexicans roared again, but this time the fire was turned in the opposite direction, and the sharp cracking of rifles told them that another body of Texans had approached the rear of the enemy. Before they could gather to the support of their friends, the firing ceased and they saw that the Mexicans were successful.

It lacked an hour of sunset. The concealed Texans saw General Woll in all the glittering bravery of his uniform, stand on one of the cannon, and make a ringing address to his men: the huzzas that followed told the meaning of his eloquence, and they knew that beyond the foe lay the lifeless or mangled bodies of their brave neighbors from the Colorado.

With music playing and drums beating, the Mexicans moved to their quarters; but all night they were carrying their dead and wounded into the city.

All night the little company lay in the shadows of

the mesquite waiting their opportunity to go to the bodies of their friends. They saw the stars of heaven shine out one by one, shaming the puny lights of the soldiers hunting for the slain, but the fever of their anxiety was not cooled. The scouts had confirmed their suspicions and they knew that is was the men from LaGrange. The minister sat in silent anguish, for he knew that his son was among them. Off in the distance the hoarse bark of the cayote could be heard. Dread scavengers!

With the first glimmer of dawn they were on the fatal field; but the dreadful cannon had so mangled its victims that they were hardly able to identify the thirty-five mutilated bodies. And here the good minister showed his great nature, for although torn with anxiety in regard to the fate of his son, yet he remembered the other sorrowing hearts that would be, when this sad news was carried back to the homes of the slain, and he took his note book and made an entry of each body he identified; and nearly every one of the thirty-five men was known to him, for he was a faithful servant of the Lord, and labored over a wide field.

They had neither ax nor spade with which to dig graves, and they found it slow and tedious work, for they were tired and worn with the strain of the last few days. It was on Sunday the little battle took place, and on Tuesday morning the little band of two hundred had grown to five hundred, for the vol-

unteers were responding promptly to the call to arms; and among them were more of the men from La-Grange. Aulcy Miller, one of the men with Dawson, had escaped and had ridden bareheaded back to Seguin with the news. He said that they heard the firing of the Texans, but were mistaken in locating them, and marched right out in sight of the Mexicans. They retreated into a clump of mesquite, but the Mexicans turned the cannon on them. When Captain Dawson saw that it was hopeless to try to escape, he raised the white flag, but the enemy did not see it until they had nearly wiped out the company. They had twelve or more prisoners; among them was the minister's son.

Revenge is a sharp spur, and among the later comers were near kinsmen and neighbors of the dead. When word was brought that the Mexicans had evacuated San Antonio, and were in retreat to the border with their prisoners, the burial of the dead was abandoned and the men mounted for pursuit.

It was nearly dark when on the next day the Texans overtook the enemy at the Hondo. They had a sharp skirmish and pressed them so hard that they abandoned the cannon. But night came on, the fighting stopped, and under cover of darkness, General Woll evaded his pursuers.

Daylight made the situation plain to the Texans, there were many sore and angry hearts among them. Captain Hayes was anxious to follow on immediately,

as Woll was only six miles ahead, and could not move rapidly with foot soldiers and prisoners. Mr. Morell begged them to go, for his son was captured, and it filled him with horror to think that he was being carried off to a Mexican prison.

Had Captain Jack's advice been followed, this story would not have been written, for General Woll admitted in his report to his government, that he had six hundred men killed; so, at the time of the retreat he could not have numbered more than seven hundred. But other leaders had come, and with them, strife.

The Texans rode slowly back to San Antonio, but there were many sore and angry hearts among them. The minister was indignant that no attempt was made to rescue the unfortunate prisoners, abandoned the effort, and returned to his home.

And John felt that this was indeed a hard fate, to be cheated out of a chance to avenge the massacre of Dawson's men.

**SAN ANTONIO
DE BEXAR**

CHAPTER III.

SAN ANTONIO DE BEXAR.

HOW many Texans did you say there were in the siege?" asked a tall, slender, fair-haired youth.

"Dead ones or live ones?" asked Orlando, with a smile.

"Both."

"O, shucks!" said the first speaker, Billie Reese, "where have you been hiding, Sellers? Every baby in Texas knows the story of the Alamo!"

"Well, I ain't a baby," said Harvey, his face flushing.

"Neither am I!" said the smallest of the boys standing in front of the ruins of the old Alamo in San Antonio. "I don't know how many Mexicans were there, alive or dead."

"Well, said Orlando, "I don't know, either." But the letter that Colonel Travis sent out the first day asking for help, said that there were over a thousand in front of the walls; and it is said they were reinforced till they numbered six thousand. There were one hundred and eighty-two Texans inside, and they held out for eleven days. Then, at last, when the awful siege was over and all of the brave Texans

were killed, Santa Anna ordered their bodies burned. For these and other deeds the Texans hated him."

General Houston had very hard work at San Jacinto to save him from the vengeance of the soldiers. In trying to commit suicide, Dr. Phelps, a surgeon in the Texas army, saved his life, and then took him to his home at Orizimbo on the Brazos, near Velasco, where for some months Santa Anna was in the hands of Dr. Phelps, where many kindnesses were shown him. About the middle of May, 1836, David G. Burnet and other distinguished Texans went there to get Santa Anna to sign a treaty of peace in which he would also acknowledge the Independence of Texas. This he did. He was then sent to Washington, the capital of the United States, where President Jackson, a great friend of General Houston, was to intercede with Mexico in behalf of the young republic. General Houston had been elected President of Texas; he thought it was wise not to keep so powerful a man as prisoner, but many of the Texans did not approve of letting Santa Anna leave Texas.

"Father says the siege of the Alamo beat the fight of Thermopylae."

"What fight was that?" asked John, eagerly.

"It's one that took place hundreds of years ago over in Greece. A captain, Leonidas, held a mountain pass with three hundred men against thousands, until he and all of his men were killed.



SAN FERNANDO CATHEDRAL
From the top of this cathedral Santa Anna bom-
barded the Alamo



THE ALAMO

"How long did they fight?" asked Gilbert Brush.

"I don't remember," said Orlando, hesitatingly.

"Orlando was quite young at the time," said Billie, demurely, "and you can't expect him to remember all about it."

"They say the Texans in the Alamo killed fifteen hundred Mexicans. How many did those Greeks kill, Orlando?"

"I don't know. I———" began Orlando.

"Came away about that time, didn't you, Orlando?" said Billie, teasingly.

"Well, it's a good while since I read about it," said Orlando, modestly. "I'll send you the book, John, when we get home."

"Say, John, would you have stuck it out like they did, or would you have surrendered?" asked Chris Yocum.

"I reckon I'd have to stick it out; for I promised James Monroe that *I'd never surrender this rifle to a Mexican.*"

"It's a little beauty!" said Billie, looking at it with a critical eye.

"It surely is!" said a soft, drawling voice behind them, with a decided Virginian accent; "and you keep your grip on it now, for that thieving red-skin over there has been eyeing it for half an hour."

The boys turned and looked up at the pleasant dark-eyed young man who spoke. He was a veritable young giant, being considerably over six feet

and built in good proportions. He wore a broad-brimmed slouch felt hat, somewhat the worse for wear, but it looked well on his curly black hair. A buckskin shirt elaborately fringed, a pair of fringed leather leggins over black trousers and beaded moccasins, constituted his costume, unless his revolver and bowie knife be ineluded.

“Why, I never heard you come up at all!” said John.

“No?” said the new-comer, grinning cheerfully down at the bright-faced boy. “I don’t aim to make much noise when I move ‘round. It won’t do in my business. Ain’t your name Hill?”

“Yes. How did you know that? I don’t know you.”

“Anybody can tell a hill when they see it, if it is only an anthill.” said Billie, the wag.

“Look here, Billie, somebody will put you out some day, thinking you are a fire; you are so awful quick and bright,” said Harvey, crushingly.

The tall young man laughed joyfully at the joking boys and answered John’s question.

“I heard you say that James Monroe gave you that rifle, and I knew a man at LaGrange by that name. Besides, you look like the Hills. I used to live down that way. My name is Wallace.”

“Big Foot Wallace?” chorused the boys.

This tribute to his reputation that the breathless

accents of the boys paid, was appreciated, but the daring young scout gave little sign.

“Christened William,” he remarked, drily.

“It was you that brought the ammunition to Seguin,” said Billie.

“Say, Mr. Wallace, tell us, how you happened to come back that way?”

“There ain’t no settlements between Austin and San Antonio,” said Wallace, lifting his hat off his glossy black curls, and wiping the sweat from his forehead. “Injuns are mighty bad just now. Mal-lon and me helped bury a man they killed and scalped while we were there. So we concluded that it wouldn’t do to fight a lot of red-skins with a keg of powder on my saddle. Besides, we knew we could get plenty of corn for our horses by coming that way.”

“You lived in Austin, too, didn’t you?” asked John.

“Uh-luh,” said Big Foot.

“Say,” said Billie, “those Injuns are coming over here. You watch out, for that old buck is full of whiskey.”

“Don’t you give them any money,” said Wallace under his breath, “and, son, don’t let him put his paws on your rifle.”

The group of Indians came up and stood in stolid silence gazing at the boys. The six boys had buck-skin shirts on, for the deer had been so plentiful in

the vicinity, that many of the men had employed their time in dressing the skins and making shirts and leggins. John had felt very proud of his shirt with its fringe; but when he saw that of the big chief with its beautiful bead embroidery, his own seemed quite commonplace. The chief had a very unpleasant appearance, for his eyebrows and lashes had been pulled out and a broad streak of red and yellow paint went across his face, and around his eyes. His ears had large brass rings swinging from the lobes. The other Indians were dressed in a similar garb, but not so gaudily. All had guns and knives. Although the boys knew that these were friendly Indians and were employed in Captain Hayes' company as government scouts, they did not enjoy the silent scrutiny of the strange eyes of the Indians.

"Big Chief, give me four bits," said the leader, addressing Wallace. "Want whiskey."

"Captain Jack says we must go dry if we ride with him."

"Huh! Give me four bits!" repeated the red man.

"Ain't seen that much money in a month of Sundays. Wait till Sam Houston sends our pay."

"That chief is sharp," said Big Foot, admiringly. "Somehow, I never thought an Indian had much fun aboard of him."

"I reckon they don't feel funny when they see you; you are generally fighting them."



Big Foot Wallace.

"That's right! But one of them played a joke on me that I am bound to get even with him for," said Big Foot, wagging his curly head.

"What was that?" asked the boys, eagerly.

"Settin's as cheap as standin'," said Big Foot, calmly squatting on the ground; and the boys promptly "hunkered" in an admiring circle.

"When I went up to Austin, the government folks and the high-toned foreign ministers wanted to build some good houses. Most everybody was living in tents or little cabins, and that won't do for the capital of a republic. There was lots of money to be made if a man had the courage to go up the river to Mount Bonnel where the big cedar grew. Most of the men were afraid to go because it is a regular stamping ground for the Injuns. I got a pretty good price for rafting cedar down the Colorado. Billie Fox and me had a cabin in the town. He was an awful lively fellow, always joking and having his fun out of everything. One morning here comes a man, hot-foot, on the trail to our door, and jumps on me and says I stole some of his truck. I asked him how he made that out, and he said he had tracked me from his cabin straight to ours. Billie Fox said I had not been out of the house. I was awful mad, and reached for him, but then I thought I would wait a bit, seeing he was not so big as me. So I says '*show me the tracks.*' We went out and sure enough, there was the tracks, moccasins just like I wore! 'Well,' says

I, 'they ain't *my* tracks,' and I set my foot down in one of them. It was two inches longer than my moccasin."

"'It's old Big Foot Injin,'" says Fox. "Can't you see how the toes point in? That thieving old Injun spent most of his time skulking around Shoal Creek bottom. Everybody knew of old Big Foot. He is nearly seven feet high, and he must weigh nearly three hundred. Well, the man, he felt awful cut up, and apologized, and we all took a drink on it; but Billie Fox would tell the story on me."

"Did you catch old Big Foot?" asked Harvey.

"No," said Wallace, "poor Fox took to calling me Big Foot Wallace and I swore that I'd kill old Big Foot for revenge. One day Fox was workin' in a little patch of corn he was trying to raise, and that Injun killed him. I have hunted him ever since, but could never get within rifle shot. I reckon that name will stick to me as long as I live." (It did. The young scout became famous for his deeds of daring and carried the nickname to the day of his death.)

"Say, how much longer do you suppose we will wait before we follow the Mexicans?" asked Harvey.

"We have to wait till this row about Burleson and Sommerville is settled," said Orlando. "Most of the men say they have the right to choose our leader according to the constitution. But President Houston says, *that's his business*. There it is. We chose General Burleson, he chooses General Sommerville.

Everybody knows that Burleson never backs out, always fights and never gets whipped. Who knows about Sommerville?"

Quien sabe," said Wallace, softly.

"Lots of men have gone back," said Harvey, "since they know General Sommerville is going to lead them."

"What a pretty branch that is over there," said Billie.

"That's no branch; that's a 'cequia, (a made ditch) and it'll take a good many twists of your tongue, Johnny boy, before you ever roll these funny Spanish names off your tongue right," said Big Foot.

"Well, you just watch me, Mr. Wallace, and some day I'll speak it equal to any Mexican in the land," responded John.

"Boys," said Big Foot; "you better stop joking and think a little. Keep your eyes open and you'll see a lot of strange things here in this old town of St. Anthony. Them old Spanish fathers certainly had a keen eye to business. Just look at the water of this river; how they've dug ditches until it's a regular network of water runin' over miles and miles of this barren region. No sooner did they clap their eyes on this here river than they began to plan about making the Injuns dig ditches and irrigate this land till it would blossom like the rose, and comin' generations would rise up to bless them for fixin' this water so convenient, showin' that them old fathers had busi-

ness sense and lots of judgment as well as religion.

“An old Mexican woman,” continued Big Foot “told me the names of the main ‘cequias. The Pajalache, or Mission Concepcion, is the oldest of all, begun in 1729. It runs right up yonder from a dam they made the Injuns build across the river, away down below where we are campin’ at the old Mission Conception. Then besides, just think of that tunnel the old fathers made the Indians build running from San Pedro Springs to the Mission Concepcion. It was made to protect the fathers and the friendly Indians from the sudden attacks and the barbarous Indians. You see how deep and clear it is? Well, them redskins had to go up and down it in a little boat and clean it out, for the water had to be drunk and used for every sort of purpose at the Missions. Then there are the San Pedro, the Alamo, and the Upper Labor ditches; to say nothing of the miles of little ditches connectin’ these big ones and making a perfect network all over this valley.”

“Wish I could see the place where this pretty river starts from,” said Billie.

“So do I,” chorused the other boys. And Big Foot no more than a big boy himself, told them “all right,” and away they went at a brisk canter—Jim Dandy, with his light rider, leading the way.

“How deep and clear and pretty the water is, just boiling right up in all these springs, and making such a pretty stream as it goes.

In some places it looks like you can jump across it, but runs fast, though—going everywhere them old Spanish fathers wanted her to; for a long time after, the old San Antonio river, from source to mouth, belonged to the King of Spain, and right along on its banks the priests were smart enough to build their missions."

"Look," said John. "I threw in a dime, and it's a shining, down maybe twenty feet, like a diamond." mond."

"Time's up," said Big Foot. "We've got to go to the Mission for our dinner, and it's high time we were off; it's four or five miles from here."

As they followed the course of the Pajalache ditch Billie said:

"I'd like to bathe in this water."

"They don't allow bathin' in these *cequias*," said Big Foot, cheerfully.

"But when we get to the Mission we will try a plunge in the river."

"Come on, Mr. Wallace; let's be movin'. Look at that store over there," said Gilbert. "Looks like the Mexicans handled it pretty rough."

"No," said Wallace, beginning to laugh. "That's John Twohig's store. He heard that the Mexicans were coming and he swore that they shouldn't steal his stock like they did last March, and he fixed some powder and blew the whole thing up."

"He did a good a job," said Billie, eyeing the ruins with deep interest. "I bet provisions were never so high in San Antonio."

"I think," said Orlando, "Billie's stomach must be empty, and his brain is working too hard. We must get him something to eat and quiet him."

Riding slowly along these historic by-ways, an almost profound silence fell upon the little group of adventurers—Big Foot suddenly broke the silence by saying, "Well, boys I guess you haven't thought much about Santonie and them first Spanish settlements away back, too long ago to be remembered? The King of Spain had the charter and the families who first came to live here were from the Canary Islands, with the finest Spanish blood in their veins, and all these old Missions hereabouts shows up them old fathers as being mighty earnest and pushing in their labors to make Christians out of the heathen, barbarous Injuns. Jest think boys what stuff them priests was made of, to ketch up them wild fighting Injuns jest like they was horses or cows and hang on to 'em by main strength or awkwardness, corral 'em in pens, or inch by inch, by work, by prayer, by beads, by every sort of thing known to man, till the poor savages, or a few of them at least, was made into Christians. They were instructed by able masters in this way to carve or make images and saints—was taught to sing the ways of the Catholic priests, and in the fields and gardens were taught to train vines, to

weave vloth, make baskets and all sorts of work in domestic life—but its mighty strange, when you think about it, that in little more than a century of time, with patience and a deep love of labor, they succeeded in getting about seven thousand of them redskins to get a religious move on 'em."

The Alamo Mission that the boys had just visited stood near the center of the town, which when the monks abandoned it, was used as a fort; for the Fathers, too, had to reckon with the hostile savages, foes alike to themselves and their converts.

Now the boys had gazed on these crumbling ruins, for the walls had been cannonaded by the Mexican troops in 1836. It was here that the little garrison of San Antonio intrenched itself and vainly waited for re-inforcements, and after eleven days of fighting, left not one man to tell the story.

But their sacrifices were not in vain. They left their countrymen a victorious war-cry, "*Remember the Alamo,*" that won the field of San Jacinto.

Alamo is the Spanish name of the cotton-wood tree, and the Mission was built in a grove of these beautiful trees. In plain view, in and out, rippled the beautiful clear water of the San Antonio river, one of the loveliest streams in the world. Back and forth it wound among the houses of this old town, and numerous acequias led it to the fields and gardens where the crops were irrigated.

The wives of the American settlers with their child-

ren had fled in March when Vazquez made his raid. Many of the Spanish settlers had left to live in Mexico or had retired to the old town of San Augustine; but the Mexican population remained in happy indifference begotten of contented poverty. They had nothing to lose and everything to gain from the presence of soldiers, Mexican or Texan, since it furnished a market for their simple edibles and gave the women a chance to reap a little profit from laundry work.

Big Foot Wallace and the boys rode through the pleasant crooked little streets with much enjoyment. Often they passed groups of women washing clothes at the river's edge under the shade of the great cypress and pecan trees.

One place was very pleasant to look at with its garden full of fig trees and pomegranates; several china trees with their shining dark green crowns gave much beauty to the place. It was the home of Mr. Sam Maverick, one of the men who had been captured a few weeks before.

"Mr. Wallace, I want to know," said Harvey, "did you know that Sam Maverick's body-servant, Griffin, was killed with Dawson's men?"

"No! How did he get with them?"

"He was sent with Mrs. Maverick in March, at the time they sent all the women and childern away. She was at LaGrange when she heard that her husband was taken prisoner; so she sent Griffin on with Nick Dawson. He had a lot of gold in a belt. He

was to try and ransom his master. He could have gotten through the lines to Maverick as easy as nothing."

"Whoopie! There's the Mission," and the whole party finished the remainder of the two miles in a mad gallop.

Harvey had preceded the others, and was stretched full length by the side of the acequia drinking freely of the delicious cold water. The rest of the party sprang from their horses and followed his example.

"I don't see," said Big Foot, "I don't see why Injuns are so crazy for whiskey when there is such good water as that."

"Huh," said Billie, cutting a knowing look at Big Foot, "You don't drink whiskey?"

"Only for pleasure," said Big Foot blandly. "The Indian, he makes a business of it."

ON THE
TRAIL

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE TRAIL.

WO long months had dragged their weary length since the call for volunteers had sounded, and at last a force of seven hundred men had been gathered. A slow and tedious process; for every citizen soldier had first to provide for the welfare and protection of his household in his absence.

John and the other boys had faithfully explored the surrounding country, spending much time among the quaint old buildings of the different Missions that cluster around San Antonio.

Of all the boys, John was the handsomest. His little slender, well-shaped body, his beautiful dark eyes that seemed always laughing, his perfect features, his clear, olive skin, with a glow of health, made him the admired of all. But his unselfish regard for the rights of others, his anxiety to be of use, his ungrudging admiration of his comrades and unconsciousness of any particular merit in himself, won the love of all.

In the open space before the old Mission Concepcion, the boys were now lounging, being detailed to watch the camp.

The western sun threw its last, level rays on the once gorgeous, but now faded front of the old church.

Under the vivifying touch of light, the red and blue crosses renewed their coloring. The yellow and orange background gleamed back with its mock gold. For the hundredth time, perhaps, John sat with dreamy eyes fixed on the inscription over the doorway, and its fascinating surroundings, symbolic, to him, of mysterious and unknown things. Over again he spelled the words: "*Asv Patrona y Princessa con estas armas Atiende esta Mission, y Defiende el punto de su Pureza.*" Which translated means: "With these arms be mindful of the Mission's Patroness and Princess, and defend (or vindicate) the state of her purity."

Though he had been told its meaning, his kind translator had been unable to tell who the "Princess" was; and when asked where she lived, he had answered gaily: "*In a castle in Spain!*" at which the boys laughed heartily and John blushed to think that it was he that had caused it.

"That lariat's done pretty good," said Billie eyeing critically the flagellum circling in and out among the words of the inscription in realistic carving. "But why in thunder did they spoil it with all those knots?"

"Why, that is meant for the rope they whipped themselves with, and those knots were to make the blood come!" answered John, proud of his bits of knowledge, and glad to share them.

"The better they were the more they thrashed themselves! You'd have done just the way they done, cause you would have been one of them; and they did not take the easy way of anything, or they never would have come away out here to these Injuns."

The story of these Franciscan Brothers had made a deep impression on the minds of the boys. This massive building with its quaint carvings awoke new thoughts within these young minds. Little by little, John had gleaned its story from the men who were awaiting marching orders. There were many students among them; college graduates jostled arms with the illiterate hunter; the trained soldier ate his vension side by side with the hardy scout; the grandson of Patrick Henry joked with the little German musician.

John, with that instinctive delicacy of preception that characterized him all of his life, had soon learned whom and when he might safely catechise on this, to him, most interesting subject.

His family were Methodists; and as all of the Texan Protestants were still sore and resentful at the Catholic yoke forced on them by the Mexican government, it was not strange that he regarded the Catholics with contempt and suspicion.

The story of these men, Roman Catholic of pronounced type, who had renounced all that the world can give in wealth, pomp and power, even the goodly heritage of their noble names, and laid these offer-

ings on the altar of religion, and lived and died in an unknown wilderness among untutored savages for the love of Christ and to save souls, seemed incredible.

And yet these buildings were indisputable proof of their energy and zeal. That the Indians had performed much of the actual labor added to the immensity of the task, for John was well aware of the redman's deep rooted aversion to work.

The sun had gone down, and the splendor of the mission had vanished. John was the first to speak, saying: "Look boys, this fire's about out, and the meat has to be cooked."

"Come on, Orlando, let us go get the wood," said Billie, flinging off towards the river.

"Guess we'll eat supper at the Medina to-morrow night," said Harvey, as he raked the coals out on one side and set the coffee pot on.

"I say," said Billie, sinking his voice to a confidential pitch, "have you heard the men talking about the General? They say that if Burleson had held on, instead of giving up to Sommerville, there would have been four or five thousand men. Believe it?"

"I don't know——," said John hesitatingly, "four or five thousand is a good many. But lots did go back on account of General Burleson's not leading. Father said so."

"Well, there are only seven hundred now; may be a few more. Can't tell till they get together; the rea-

son the camps have been kept scattered was so the Mexican spies could not tell how many there are."

Familiar with the garb of the frontier it did not occur to these young minds that there was anything new, peculiar or picturesque in the appearance of these hardy men who constituted the command. But there was buckskin, broad cloth, trousers of coarse jeans, flannel, blue or whitet cotton shirts, all were as plentiful as the deerskin hunting shirts. In the



Mission Concepcion

haste of preparation each man had worn what he had, without a thought of what he looked like.

The attention of the boys was distracted by the arrival of three young men wearing leather overalls.

These were commonly called "chaps," perhaps with reference to being worn when riding through the chapperrel after cattle. Each wore a gay silk handkerchief knotted around his sunburned throat, each pushed his wide-brimmed hat as far back on his head as safety would allow, thereby showing a little rim of white forehead between the thatch of hair and the sunburned face. He recognized them as part of the famous "Cowboy" company, and he drew a long sigh of pleasure as he watched them swing out of the saddle as only a cowboy can, and step off in that peculiar stilting gait, caused by the high heels of their boots, and made musical by the clinking of their enormous spurs.

No such sunsets are to be seen as those of West Texas. On the closing of this perfect day, the purple horizone which hung about the scene like an enchanted veil, dropped by the hand of some genius, gathered itself away toward the northern sky. Brighter and brighter flamed the sunset, bluer and deeper and deeper grew the sky above them; the pink cloud changed into a black mountain. Suddenly the sun so reluctant, dropped out of sight. The gleaming opal later vanished, the cloud bars changed color, the pale evening star shook like a silver leaf above the horizon, the air grew chill, and the golden prairie became sombre.

They had now reached the beautiful, clear, swift running Medina, and having found a suitable spot, the activities of camp life were soon in full motion.

Carcasses of beef and deer were soon hanging in gory nakedness, on poles supported by the forked tops of stakes set solidly in the ground.

One stout young fellow held John's respectful admiration. His straight, sinewy figure was clad in a buckskin suit elaborately fringed; on his curly hair, which he wore quite long, as was the custom, a "coonskin" cap rested jauntily, the long tail of the animal had not been cut off, and waved in a most realistic manner as his muscular arms moved. With easy dexterity, he drew the sharp bowie through the red flesh, tossing welcome pieces to the expectant dogs, or handing large and more choice portions to the different purveyors at the many camp fires. John never stopped until he found this gallant young fellow was Captain Ewen Cameron, who commanded the cowboys.

The many fires twinkled, the stalwart forms moved in and out of the light and shadow. The cooks with hats slouched to shade their eyes from the firelight, maintained a fierce intensity of expression as they skillfully turned the hoecakes, or watched the roasting meat on the forked stick, twirling it dexterously at just the right moment. Quiet groups of men with slight interest were playing cards, while an outer circle participated by lively sympathy in the varying fortune of the players. The group of Indian scouts with their grim visages sat taciturn and seemingly indifferent to the life that throbbed around them. Off

in the gloom beyond the camp light, some weary, homesick man lay prone on the sod, thinking perchance of the wife and little ones, left in the homely little log house to await with anxious hearts, his return from pursuit of their foe.

John felt so drowsy that he was glad when his father and Jeff declared themselves ready for bed, and soon, wrapped in his blanket, he lay on the soft grass and in dreams, the mother once more claimed her child.

Once in the night he awoke with a start of fear, believing he had heard the warwhoop of a savage, but it was only the owls down in the pecan and cypress timber that so thickly set the Medina bottom. He could hear the bell of the leader of the pack mules with its clink-clank, clink-clank, slowly climbing with the leisurely movements of the animal as it cropped the rich herbage, and he thought he heard a long, discordant scream, blood-curdling as a maniac's yell. He reached a hand instantly toward Jeff, then withdrew it instantly as he recognized the call of a panther. Close upon this came the bellow of a steer, which sounded so much louder at night.

Off on the low hills of the open country, he could hear cayotes barking and snarling or howling pitifully; and then the dogs in camp would respond, rushing forward in a semi-circle, yelping furiously, then setting back on their haunches, lift their black

muzzles up toward the starry vault and give vent to a loud wail of anguishing sounds.

In the intervals of quiet, between the outbursts of canine melody, John caught the full benefit of a chorus of frogs with a heavy bass voice which kept saying, "*Better go home! Better go home! Better_____*"

A turkey gobbled, instantly a chorus arose. Turkeys gobbled, roosters crowed, hens cackled, calves and lambs bleated, and above all arose the long, uncanny hoot of the owl, and then a forest of them replied.

John tried to ask what was the matter, but could not move his lips. Some one shook him. He grunted.

"Wake up!" his father's pleasant voice said, "Don't you hear the sergeant?"

An hour later the camp was deserted. The expedition was on the road to historical fame.

But they saw only the Presidio Trail.

They waited many days for the arrival of the artillery and when it came, to the amazement of the men, it was sent back and the whole command was thrown into a state of frenzied anger. So it was ordered that they should begin their long ride over this uninhabited country with only their rifles. Perhaps the only light hearts among those men were our boy friends, who were over-eager for some development by which they might soon overtake the enemy. They were now upon the identical highway over

which only a few weeks ago the San Antonio men had marched as prisoners—but for some unaccountable reason they were now ordered to take an oblique cut to the left from the Presidio Trail, through the chaparral to the Laredo Trail, over barren ground covered with cacti and other thorny growth, and roamed over by wild beasts. Now bunches of antelope would cut across their path and disappear, only to make a wide circle and re-appear on the same side on which they were first seen; these beautiful creatures have much curiosity, and it often leads to their death. Every hunter in the expedition knew that by fastening something red around him, he could ride within a few feet of the innocent animal before it would take flight. Herds of buffalo, wild cattle and horses were seen almost daily. Birds of every hue and color; and nothing seemed so strange as some of the feathered inhabitants of these great plains. The chaparral cock which seemed to push itself along; the little desert hawk, which made such an awful screeching noise just after night; the chuckling wren, and the plumed quail; red birds, and worlds of other beautiful and interesting members of the feathered songsters of this great uninhabited region, gave the boys great pleasure.

They had now reached the Nueces, which they found a raging torrent, and Captain Jack told the men he was going to build a bridge. Some thought he would camp and wait for the water to go down.

"Wait for nothing! What Jack says he does," said one of the men. "He ain't one of the waiting kind." Without an instant of hesitation, Jack Hayes and Bogart plunged in and swam across. The companies of Fisher and Mitchell were sent forward to do the work. McMullen spurred his horse down the slope into the muddy flood, and others followed him, and soon John and his comrades saw two giant trees from either side of the Nueces topple, their tops interlocking. The Nueces had a steep, high bluff on its east bank, but the west bank was low and heavily timbered. The bottom land extended two or three miles before it reached any rise of ground. There had been heavy rains in the upper country, and a stiff norther was on, and the water was icy cold. Yet these dauntless men, waist deep, in the chilling flood, hung with one arm to the trees, while they chopped the limbs off to make a flooring for the bridge.

There were plenty to help as soon as they saw what was to be done; but it was not until the next morning that the rest of the expedition filed slowly across the valley of water which was two or three feet in depth, until they reached the actual stream, where they found the newly improvised bridge. John was surprised to see what a good bridge they had built in so rough a way. Now that he was closer he could see better what they had done. The tall trees he had seen fall were the foundation; close across these were laid the limbs shorn of their smaller branches. Then

the smaller branches, twigs and tula grass were used to fill up the spaces between, so that even the little hoofs of the pack mules did not slip through.

For two days they had floundered through the water-soaked sandy waste, but with spirits unsubdued. In spite of the days of fatigue, night found them as joyful as ever, beguiling the time between supper and slumber with songs, impromptu burlesques, stories and recitations. One of the star performers at these nightly entertainments was Lieutenant Daniel Drake Henrie, of the Brazoria company, and a prime favorite with officers and men. He had traveled the world over, had racy gift at repartee, spoke several languages, could tell stories "that would make a dog laugh," and had a voice so sweet that when he sang "The Soldier's Tear," it was difficult to account for the sudden colds that afflicted so many of the men; while "Long, Long Ago" would produce a wave of homesickness among those who had sweethearts or sisters, who sang this sweet melody in their homes so far away.

However, it was a relief to all when once they found the smooth, firm ground of the trail to Laredo. Once more the luxuriant grass appeared, and the mesquite that made the plain a waving, shimmering mass of green in the summer. The boughs were laden with the long seed pods and the horses snatched many delicious mouthfuls as they jogged along the monotonous way.

If the animals feasted on the beans of the mesquite, one of the most nutritious and healthful of foods for cattle or horses, the men also found the roots of the trees of service, for they had to dig down deep into the ground for firewood.

When night came on, all lay down to rest except those who were on guard. Nor did they heed the signs of the approaching storm. They had no tents, nor did they desire them, for the most of them had become familiar with the rough life of the frontier, and if they had a horse, rifle, and ammunition, they could always find game to eat and the whole earth for a bed; everybody slept.

There were two hundred pack-mules, which with the horses of the men, made over a thousand head of stock; these had to graze at night for the men rode in the day. Each man hobbled his horse and then the guard rode the circle at night. Of course, the guard was divided into watches. Usually the men did this duty with cheerfulness, but on this particular night it was an unpleasant as well as dangerous duty, for Jack Hayes and Ben McCullough had left the main division after seeing that the bridge was started in the right manner. They were only sixty miles from Laredo, where a troop of Mexicans was quartered, whom Sommerville hoped to take by surprise.

Probably there were Mexican spies watching for the Texan force; and too, they had been warned that the Nueces river was infested by Apaches, who were

even more to be dreaded than the Comanches.

The night was dark, and the wind which had died down in the afternoon, sprang into fresh fury and brought with it a heavy rain. The men on guard went whistling and singing to keep their horses, which seemed to be scenting approaching danger, in the circle, as the cold rain stung like nettles.

Suddenly it came, and pell-mell, without any seeming reason, several thousand hoofs were beating the earth in a wild flight from the nameless terror.

Right over the sleeping camp they galloped. The startled sleepers sprang to their feet terror stricken, not knowing whether it was an earthquake or cyclone, Mexicans or Indians.

There was no more sleep that night for all realized the seriousness of their predicament. Fortunately the men on guard were expecting the catastrophe, and so they rode with the maddened throng, it was not long before many of the fugitives trotted meekly into camp.

One unfortunate man, the Rev. Edward L. Fontaine, a grandson of Patrick Henry, saw the horses coming, and trying to get out of the way fell into a mass of prickly pear. A most horrible experience! Fortunately the Captain of his company was Dr. Jerome B. Robertson, an able physician, as well as Captain, and he began at once to remove the thorns before they had time to work into the flesh, and pro-

duce the innumerable tiny, festering sores which are so hard to heal.

While the men were engaged in an animated discussion, a thrill of expectation and excitement ran through the command; they saw Flaco ride into camp and hold a consultation with General Sommerville.

He brought news of the capture of two Mexican scouts, which fired the weary men with new enthusiasm. Forgotten were wet clothes, bruises, scanty provisions, and the lack of blankets! Forgotten the long monotonous stretches of wilderness, the thorny chaparral, the quagmire! Forgotten the strife, and dissension of leaders! They only remembered that revenge was now within their grasp. Only sixty short miles away lay the hated foe in unsuspecting ease.

To march at once before the birds of the air could carry the alarm; to fall upon them; to annihilate; this was the open path with no obstacle.

“What are you thinkin’ about, Big Foot, you look so pleased?” said Billie.

Big Foot stood with a broad grin on his face, and turning to one of the men said, “I’m thinkin’ about how we are goin’ to walk right up to them Mexicans without any warnin’. You see Captain Jack has caught their scouts!”

But the enemy was not surprised. When the eager Texans overtook Captain Hayes and his little band, they found one very crest-fallen member, enduring the rough jests of his comrades with what grace he

might, but with the good humored stoicism of one whose valor being proven can afford to ignore a mishap that might happen to the wisest.

"What is it? What are they laughing about? Jeff, have they found out?" asked John eagerly.

Why it seems that John Alsbury had one of the Mexicans to guard last night. He was one of the men that helped fix the bridge, and he was just worn out; so he concluded that when the Mexicans fell asleep he might as well take a little nap himself; so to make sure of his prisoner, *he just made a pillow of him!* I suppose he thought he would wake right up if the Mexican stirred. But I reckon the Mexican was shamming, for when daylight came, he found his *Mexican had turned into a saddle!"*

"Turned into a saddle?" repeated John.

"Yes! The doggoned fellow had actually fixed him up comfortably with a saddle for a pillow; I reckon if he had had a blanket, he'd a tucked him up and kissed him good-night."

When the full humor of the affair dawned upon the boys, they gave away to shouts of laughter.

"He certainly had a kind heart," said Orlando, as he recovered from his wild joy. "Such consideration for an enemy's comfort. I reckon he would apologize to you before cutting your throat."

"Yes." said John, hilariously, "he would say 'Pardon, senor, it is painful, but necessary. One little moment, and you'll feel no discomfort.'" A

fresh burst of joy greeted this sally of John's, but his father smiled and shook his head as he cast glances at General Sommervelle.

"Captain Jack feels mighty sore over this business," said Big Foot, "for his sweetheart is a sister to John Twohig's wife, and he is going to have mighty hard work explaining to those two women why he let the Mexican walk poor John off that-a-way. They think that Jack could whip the whole Mexican army with his little hand full of scouts."

Noisy, argumentative voices arose from a group of Brazoria men. John caught fragments of the conversation as he sat Turk fashion on the ground. He recognized one of the speakers as Captain Ewen Cameron, a leader among men. A tall, fine looking man with a physique in keeping with his great strength and endurance, he was a native Scotchman, of an ancient Highland clan; and he had all the courage of his ancestry.

"I went clear down to Burleson's house," said Cameron. "He was more than willing—— But the President said no——"

"I have no grudge against the General," said the Irishman, "but I'm hearing it everywhere that Burleson's the man for the hour." This speaker was Thomas Murry, who was in Cameron's company.

"Well, I have," said the first speaker, General Thomas Jefferson Green, "I have a contempt for a man who is willing to head an expedition that plainly

declared they wanted another man.”

“Zommerbill is a goot man, poot he iss more beaze-
ful as Purleson,” said a German who had been listening,
while he skillfully abstracted a coal from the fire,
spat on it, quickly picked it up and dexterously
dropped it into the bowl of his pipe.

They were camped for dinner when Billie saw
Flaco looking at the various groups of eaters with a
strange expression on his face. He sauntered up to
Flaco with a friendly manner and said, “Why ain’t
you eating dinner, Flaco? Come mess with me.”

“White warrior eat too much. Move slow. Injun
chief no eat on war path. *Catch Mexican first, scalp
him then make feast! Dance.*”

Billie hastened to repeat this biting criticism to the
group of Rangers who were resting after a hearty
meal. A rather feeble laugh greeted his excellent
imitation of the Indian chief, but a thin lipped young
man with sandy hair, rose up from the ground and
fixing Billie with his steely blue eyes said:

“Young man, you give Flaco my compliments and
ask him if he was talking about the time the white
warriors fought Comanches at Plum Creek. He seems
to be quite willing to be on our side of the fight.”
A roar of joy followed this speech for each man felt
his honor fully vindicated. The Comanches were the
deadly foes of the Lipan tribe and were the most
powerful and warlike savages in the Southwest. It
was at Plum Creek that the settlers in 1840 met a

band of five hundred Comanches and fought them all the way to where the town of Lockhart now stands. It was a great victory for the white men for it gave the Indians a thorough respect for their courage and ability as warriors and made them cautious in venturing near the settlements.” The speaker was Captain Ben McCulloch, a famous Indian fighter and in the Civil war an able Confederate leader.

3



AT
LAREDO

CHAPTER V.

AT LAREDO.

THE sixty miles to Laredo were traveled as rapidly as the eager Texans could move, stopping only for food. Day and night alike, were spent in the chase after the Mexican soldiers.

Just before daylight, the Texans entered Laredo,



feeling sure of getting into a fight. To their great surprise, not a soldier was to be seen, the escaping scout having reached there in time to warn the soldiers. But the good citizens of Laredo, ever tactful, and living up to the highest standard of Latin diplomacy, did not meet the incoming Texan soldiers as enemies, but in terms of the greatest courtesy and respect they were greeted with words of good fellowship and good will; in their own graceful language, they said

buenos dias, senores caballeros; nos gustan mucho, los Americanos. Bienvenidos, extranjeros! Bienvenidos! (Good day, gentlemen; we like the Americans very much; welcome, strangers! Welcome!) This was only maddening to the Texans, who could ill conceal their chagrin at having missed the Mexican soldiers, and thus visit a just retribution upon the whole nation.

The Texans passed through the town and camped about one mile above, but were without food, and there were few blankets among them; and the nights were cold. They insisted upon General Sommerville's crossing the Rio Grande and making a fight, but he would not yield to their wishes. The next day, the camp was changed to one three miles from the town. The men were also angry because General Sommerville did not demand as many supplies as they thought they ought to have, and so, without ceremony, on the second morning of their stay a large number of the men went into the stores and demanded and obtained large supplies of all they wanted. But the next day General Sommerville sent them all back to their respective owners. The act was considered a reflection upon the honor of the Texas soldiers. The officers held a council, and almost all voted to cross the river, overtake the Mexicans, whip them and then recross in safety. but the men insisted that he should go to Guerrero, two days' travel from Laredo, by horse and on the

14th day of December they bent their steps southward till they arrived at the mouth of the Salado near Carrizo village, just across the river from Guerrero. They found some flat boats and in these they crossed in the town. The Alcalde (magistrate of the town and a Frenchman who could speak English) came to the camp of the Texans. He at once tendered the surrender of the town, but insisted the Texans should camp beyond the town limits, and he would furnish the troops with food and clothing. General Sommerville agreed to this plan, but the weather grew cold and a drizzling rain set in and the few clothes, blankets and food sent by the Alcalde were far from sufficient to make the men comfortable. Everybody was mad and indignant, and they were especially resentful toward General Sommerville, thinking he was too easy on the Alcalde.

On the morning of December 19th, General Sommerville made up his mind to return to Texas and bring the whole command along if they would come.

Accordingly 350 men obeyed the command of the legalized officer and availed themselves of the chance to return to their homes; General Sommerville leading the way. On this day 1842 begins what is in history known as the "Meir Expedition of Texas, the three hundred men who declined to return home, re-organized and re-formed into companies under command respectively of Captain Ewen Cameron, Wm. H. Eastland, I. G. W. Pearson, Wm. N.

Ryan, Claudies Berster, John R. Baker, and Charles K. Reese, with Captain Wm. R. Fisher as colonel, who was familiar with the language, customs and habits of the Mexican general, an ally of General Canales, of the Federal Mexican war, and Colonel Thomas Jefferson Green as second officer and in command of the boats in which they were to embark from Guerrero.

While the men were earnestly discussing the situation as to pushing ahead to seek revenge upon the Mexicans, Mr. Hill cast longing glances at his youngest son. Finally he said:

“John, you had better be careful how you talk to the other boys about going with our new command. It might become a matter of life or death, and you don’t want to be the innocent means of bringing sorrow to their people.”

John obeyed; he did not wish any such awful responsibility to be laid at his door by an accusing conscience. He felt a chill of dismay steal over him, and he followed his father about, without his usual happy smile or the cheerful greeting that endeared him to his comrades. But his anxiety was soon relieved by his beloved chums making their appearance at the camp fire with all the gayety and assurance of Dumas’ three heroes. The six brave little boys went forward with the new organization!

“The navy,” as General Green called it, was duly organized on December 20th, and all who were not

ordered to go by land and take charge of the horses, embarked on the boats.

The boys found it wildly exciting, for of course, they were a part of the marines. General Green was the commander of the fleet and Samuel Lyon, a former sailor, was made sailing master, a title that probably carried more honor than responsibility. Dr. Brenham was appointed marine surgeon and Colonel Bonnel, lieutenant, and each of the boats had its commander; so "the navy" was well organized, considering the simplicity of its purpose, which was to carry the troops more speedily down the river; secondly, to give them an opportunity to destroy the boats of the Mexicans, so that the pursuit by water was impossible, and as the Rio Grande was in no place fordable, they could in future engagements, if pressed, retreat to their boats, gain the Texas side of the river, and be safe from the enemy.

And now, while the navy is floating down the river, let us try to understand the reasons for their course. It is not possible, however, to explain the motives of each and every man in the expedition, but we can give the general reasons which their leaders have given.

It was the desire of the Texans to avenge the first Mexican raid of the previous March; but the Texan Congress was fearful of making any move that would seem a declaration of war with Mexico, as Texas was in no financial condition to raise and maintain an

army. Not until September were any decisive steps taken, and then the utmost caution was used, as nominally, at least, peace was supposed to exist between the two countries.

The men who organized under Fisher believed that they had been sent to keep the Mexicans from making any more incursions into the territory of the Texas Republic. They believed they were to give battle to any force they chanced to meet. They believed they were expected to levy on the towns or villages for needed supplies, as was the rule in military warfare, and in this belief they were confirmed, because they had been furnished barely sufficient rations to last them to the border; and in case these supplies were refused they could forage for themselves, or inflict such punishment on the place as their leader saw proper.

They did not believe that President Houston had forbidden Sommerville to cross the border to fight. They attributed his failure to exact supplies to a want of courage. To this same reason they attributed their forced march through the chaparral. When he disbanded them, they felt themselves within their rights to elect a leader, according to the law made by the Texas Congress in January, 1840, which General Green quotes in support of their action. They believed that their government had sent them on this expedition for good reasons and they did not see any change in the reason, although they had

changed their leaders. The purpose for which they had been sent remained unaccomplished and if General Sommervelle felt inadequate to the task set before him, that was no reason why they should abandon it, since there were others who felt willing to undertake it and confident of success.

The boys found it very exciting, for the General had arranged for them to participate in the naval maneuvers. These consisted in burning the boats they found, and in levying on the small villages for provisions.

The boys felt that war was glorious, but rather easy. A few frightened villagers fleeing to the chaparral and hiding among the sand hills leaving their poor little possessions to the mercy of the invaders.

The days were cheerful once more, for their stomachs were full, but the nights were cold and blankets scarce. The saddle and the chaparral had worn thin and made grievous rents in the apparel of the men, so all were glad when they reached the town of Mier, six miles from the Rio Grande, the first place of any size since they left Guerrero.

On the 22nd day of December, leaving their horses on the Texas side with a guard, for of course they must always be on the alert for the Indians, they moored their flat-boats to the west bank, detailed a guard to watch them and marched into the town of Mier, demanding surrender.

The Alcalde and the principal men of the town conferred with Colonel Fisher and General Green and readily agreed to supply them with everything needed. They supposed this troop to be a small detachment from a larger force secreted on the other side.

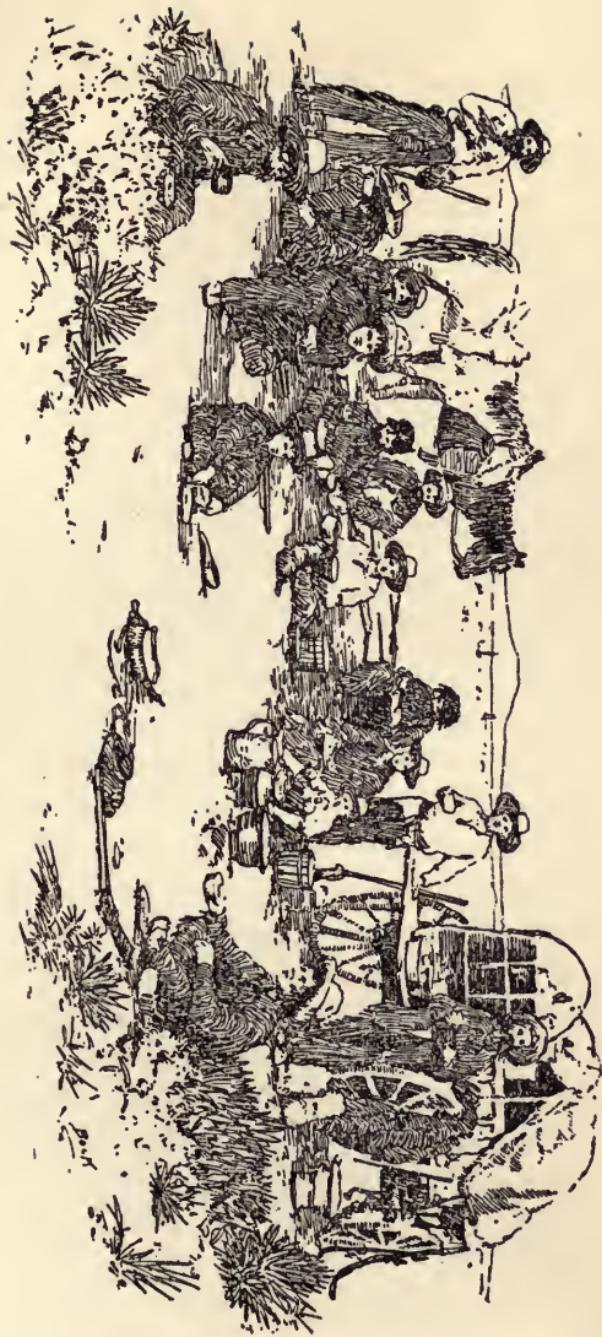
*An Alcalde, in our country is simply a magistrate and his office is administered in a modest, unpretentious manner. But in Mexico, he becomes a man of more importance in the administration of his office. The insignia of this functionary is a cane with either a gold or silver head, to which is appended a big bunch of silk tassels. The Alcalde cannot preside, nor are the people expected to obey him, without the insignia of his office in his hand.

With his cane, he is an Alcalde, without it he becomes a private citizen. Seldom are oaths administered, but when they are, the Alcalde lays his forefinger with his thumb over the head of the cane.”

So keen had been the disappointment for the men when at Guerrero, the supplies had proven so inadequate to the demand, Colonel Fisher determined to protect them by taking precaution against a breach of faith on the part of the Mexicans.

Night was drawing near and although the order was being rapidly filled, some delay in getting transportation for so large a quantity of goods was inevi-

Breakfast on the Plains



able. The Colonel ordered the men to return to their camp.

To John's surprise he saw a Mexican gentleman in the rich and picturesque costume of the *hacendado*, mounted on a horse, which was all gaily decked out, while by his side strode General Green and a strong escort of men. As the General marched by with his distinguished prisoner, Billie Reese was regarding him attentively and thought he saw him wink.

It had been a topic of much discussion as to what should be done with the next Alcalde in order to secure supplies. Each boy would give his ideas on the subject artfully led on by General Green, while the officers would sit and listen with much amusement at the blood-thirsty plans of the "fire-eaters," as the boys were called.

So many of the men having returned to their homes, the boys from the different companies naturally saw more of each other. One boy named Chris Yocum from Liberty county, was much liked by all, as he was a nice, manly little fellow, though only fourteen. He and another boy named Gilbert Brush were active members of these fierce councils of war, and General Green used to laughingly say to his brother officers, that if he had a regiment composed of boys like them, he believed he could make a new conquest of Mexico. Each of these boys was a fine shot, and as for riding, the world can show no better rider than the Texan. Indian raids, and fights with

Mexicans were the daily topics of their lives. So their plans lacked nothing in variety of daring; but after each had launched his scheme on the stream of public opinion, and perhaps run foul of some rock, then John, who was always regardful of others, would say politely, "Now what would you do, General?" And the General would always reply, "Wait and see!"

Although the sight of the distinguished hostage was reassuring as to the supplies, it failed to make the men as gay as usual. The six miles that lay between them and their boats were not pleasant walking. Their shoes were full of holes and the sand and rough gravel cut their tender feet, for they were used to riding and had had little experience of long marches. The sun had ceased to shine, the sky was gloomy and leaden in hue, for another storm was gathering. The ugly clumps of thorny underbrush seemed more unsightly, since their glimpse of the pretty little town they had just left, and no doubt many of them felt twinges of homesickness.

The little band trudged on through the sullen twilight in depressing quiet. John's eyes rested on Yocum's back, for the boys as usual managed to keep together. His mind turned to his home. It was the time they usually had supper. He wondered if his mother missed him at the table. He knew just where each one would sit! His mind revelled in the feast his fancy depicted. He could see Mammy Lou's

kindly black face as she buttered the hot cornbread for his little sister, or served a fresh relay of fried chicken. Oh, for one good drink of that buttermilk with little flecks of gold on its foamy surface! He was sure they had fresh pork for supper, as it was time to kill the hogs. "*Nearly Christmas!* Yes, surely they must have killed the hogs, and that meant sausages, spare ribs——." A shot rang out on the air at the same instant Yocum threw his arms up, and fell prone on the gravel. So sudden was it, that poor John, who was just behind his young companion, stared dazed at the prostrate figure. Exclamations ran through the straggling lines and each man brought his rifle into readiness while they halted in obedience to command. It was too dark to see more than the shadowy silence. Even the men near Yocum did not know who shot him. Then an unhappy man in front of him said the branch of a tree had struck against his rifle and so discharged it. Soon the sad news drifted through the lines. It was not an ambuscade as they had feared, but all felt sorrow not only for the loss of this brave little comrade, but for the unfortunate man who had been the instrument of his death. What words of comfort could they give him?

John's happy dream was over. Tired, but no longer conscious of either hunger or fatigue, he moved on to the boats with the rest of the command. The water lapped on the beach with that musical sound so pleasing to the ear. He heard the noise of

the men's feet as they tramped into the boats, the heavy knock of their guns as the stocks struck the bottom of the boats. No one whistled, no one sang, no one laughed, no one carelessly cursed in that free, unconscious way of the soldier. All were thinking of the limp, young figure borne between four of the men. Death in battle was a thing to be met with a laugh. But death slipping in, in this stealthy fashion and seizing so young a victim, was horrible.

The men cooked their scanty suppers and soon were joking freely about the Alcalde and the supplies. The hopeless Don Juan sat on the ground in his gorgeous raiment and his dark eyes roamed restlessly over the scene before him. The ragged, unkempt men stalked in and out the firelight, fierce and wild looking with their long hair, their unshaven faces and their grotesque costumes. Hardly would mothers or wives have known them as they squatted in front of the fire and broiled the meat on the coals.

Fitful gusts of a cold northwest wind swept down over the sand hills laden with dust and grit, beating the fire flat, filling the men's eyes with smoke and covering their meat with ashes; now fanning the flames to fierce pillars of light that illumined the mounds of sand, the sharp rocks thrusting their ribs through the thin coating of earth, the scraggy clumps of cacti and dwarf mesquite, only for a moment, then all was obscurity and the wind passed on softly over the open space where the men were digging the grave

for their boy comrade. John sat silently in the background of the little knot of men which composed his particular company. His father stole anxious, kindly glances at the set little face, which, pillow'd on its hand, gazed with somber eyes off into the darkness.

Harvey and Billie called him to come and see how General Green was taking care of the Alcalde. They went on without him, however, and Orlando slipping out of the shadows threw an affectionate arm over John's shoulder. Although held as a prisoner, the sympathetic instincts of the Mexican character were strong in the Alcalde. Looking at the body of the dead boy, he exclaimed with a mist in his eyes, "*Pobre muchachito, tan inocente, lejos de sus padres y su hogar, querido.*" (Poor little boy, so innocent, so far away from his father and mother and his beloved home.)

Later on the men lined up around the open grave. The burial service of the Episcopal church was read by the Rev. Edward B. Fontaine, with heads uncovered, they watched the lowering of the body wrapped in a blanket. When the last clod was thrown in place, each man placed a rock on the grave; this was to prevent the coyotes from desecrating the body. They did not fire a salute for ammunition was too scarce and precious in a hostile country to be used in empty ceremonial.

Soon the camp was asleep save for sentinels who made their lonely rounds, now facing the keen wind

which blew with steady fury, now stumbling over the loose stones and cursing softly, or halting in the shelter of a thick clump of bushes, and pausing to rest and think.

The horses, having eaten their corn, stood with drooping heads backed to the storm. Occasionally some vicious broncho would snap his teeth at a companion, whereupon a temporary confusion of squeals and stamping hoofs would ensue then all would relapse into black shadows again.

From far off, among the sand hills, the coyotes raised their discordant *miserere*, and from the chaparral close by, the owls answered in demoniac glee. Poor Don Juan lay in sullen misery, one leg held as in a vise, between the two stalwart sinewy pillars of the redoubtable "Commodore Verde" as the Alcalde called General Green, seized an unwilling hostage, yet he had pictured only a little tedious waiting in the comforts of an elegantly appointed tent between the ideal and the real. There was a wide difference between the appointments of a Texan "Commandante" and those of the Mexicans. Sleep did not cast her balm on his hurt mind, nor warm his chilled and stiffening limb.

Only a little way from him lay his young Texan namesake, sleepless, too, although sheltered under the blankets between his big brother and his loving father.

Over in Mier, a dark-eyed *señora* was weeping before the shrine of her apartment, praying for the release of her husband from the American bandits.

Hundreds of miles away, in the farm house on the Colorado, a white-robed figure was kneeling, and imploring that her dear ones be saved from all harm and be restored to their homes.

The morning of the 24th was as dreary as the preceding evening. The wind was cold and piercing, and the little heap of rocks that marked the grave of Yocom gave a touch of sadness in a landscape already replete with mournful suggestions. John, Orlando and Harvey were backed against the north side of a little gully, to be out of the reach of the wind, and were watching the direction in which they expected to see the supplies from Mier.

"I think it will be hard to cheer the *Alcalde*. I saw him and the Colonel eating dinner together," said Harvey with a giggle, "and he looked mighty sick and low-spirited, but General Green, he was strutting around and spouting poetry, something Lord Byron wrote, and Dr. Sinnickson was laughing so he could not eat and Colonel Fisher looked like he would burst a blood vessel trying to keep in."

The men needed all the cheerful nonsense to keep up their spirits, for, although they moved their camp down the river to Los Arrieros, the looked-for supplies failed to make their appearance. Poor Don Juan suffered more keenly than they, for while all

felt the pangs of hunger and the discomfort of insufficient warmth, still they had companionship and freedom, while he was held captive by a set of men whom he regarded as outlaws or highwaymen.

Christmas eve saw the poor Alcalde once more the unwilling bed fellow of the robust general. Few of the men could sleep. The situation was serious.

When General Sommerville left the three hundred Texans at Guerrero, Captain Jack Hayes, Ben and Henry McCulloch, Tom Green, C. C. Cady, Ephriam McLean and a few others declined to return with Sommerville, but they also would not unite with the new organization under Fisher. Still they were deeply interested in the outcome of the new command and being the best scouts they remained until the first entrance of the Texans into Mier, and were among the first to enter the town. But wise men and scouts as they were, experienced rangers with a record of long service, they wisely withdrew on hearing that General Ampudia, Brigadier and General in command of the northern division of the Mexican Army, with an overwhelming force, was coming to meet the Texans, and would prove dangerous to the smaller force under Colonel Fisher.

When the Texans returned to their camp, these scouts had remained on the other side to watch the movements of the Mexican troops in the vicinity of Mier. It was an anxious time, for the scouts had not been heard from, and fears were entertained of their

capture. Soon after this, Jack Hayes and the other scouts named, returned to Texas.

Early on Christmas Eve morning, however, two of the scouts brought in a Mexican, and from him they learned that two Mexican Generals, Ampudia and Canales, were down near the river, about two miles with seven hundred men and two cannon.

Excitement ran high, and all were unanimous in wishing to cross at once to fight. At two o'clock on the afternoon of Christmas Eve day. The rest of the command were crossing the Rio Grande, save those who were toled off much against their will, to remain with and guard the horses. At four o'clock, all the companies were on the west bank, ready to begin the tramp across the sterile waste that lies between the plains of the Rio Grande and Alamo rivers. It was very unpleasant weather, for although the wind had died down, a mild, drizzling rain had set in, and the feet of the men were poorly shod for the road that lay before them.

But wet clothing and tender feet were forgotten when, a little later, McMullen met them with the news that Baker and his scouts had had an encouter with the Mexicans and that they had almost caught Sam Walker as he was climbing a fence—they caught his boots and he had, by a quick movement, left them in their hands. Baker wanted re-inforcements at the lower ford. With all speed they hastened to the assistance of their comrades, but when the Mexicans

saw the new division, they ceased fighting and moved into the city.

It was seven o'clock and very dark. The Texans were now occupying Mexican territory on the high bluff of the Alamo river. Colonel Fisher thought it best to try to cross the river between the two regular fording places, and in doing this they ran more danger than they thought. El Cantaro ford has a smooth, pebbly bottom, the ground sloping gently toward it on either side; but, both above and below the ford, the bed of the river had many jagged rocks, and holes seemingly bottomless and full of water even in a drought when the river bed looks like a stony desert.

Here the men were halted, given orders to rest, and to keep the guns covered so that their loads would not be damp, while Capt. Reese was to take a man and attempt to find out whether the Mexicans had placed their pickets.

With the rain beating softly in his face, John sat straining his eyes at the darkness, holding his rifle close to his heart trying to distinguish objects on the opposite bank; but there was neither moon nor star, and save for red flashes from the guns of the pickets, it might have been deserted.

Billie had been silenced by the fusillade from the opposite side. He watched anxiously to see the return of the brother whom he idolized. Meanwhile the news crept through the ranks that General Green

had heard the clanking of the cavalry who were lying in wait at the ford.

Colonel Fisher sent Baker and his spies to attract their fire, while the remainder of the men were to climb down the bluff and follow the streams, until they found a place to cross.

"How can we find a ford in this darkness?" asked John.

"General Green has turned the Alcalde over to Sailing-Master Lyon. I reckon he had had his instructions what to do in case Don Juan makes any mistake about the right place."

"Hush!" said Billie. "Is that Charlie?"

"Something has happened. There goes Dr. Sinnickson."

Poor Joe Berry had fallen down one of the steep gullies in the bank of the river and had broken his hip. Seven men with Dr. Sinnickson were detailed to get him out, and they were left to carry the poor fellow into an old deserted adobe house standing not very far from the river's bank.

Their comrades moved on, slipping and sliding down the treacherous wet clay banks, grasping at bushes to save themselves, following the narrow path along the water's edge till they came to a place where they could wade the swift current. The water was above the knees of the men, and John found it hard work to keep his footing, and hold up his precious rifle out of the water.

The noise of their crossing was drowned by the rushing of the water over its rocky bed. A lucky thing! For some of the men could not restrain their tongues when they slipped on the uncertain bottom and raked their shins against the sharp edge of the rocks.

At last all was over, and as yet they were not discovered.



MIER
THE BATTLE

CHAPTER VI.

MIER.

THE sleepy, peaceful little town bearing this name is situated about six miles from the Rio Grande river, in the state of Tamaulipas. The river Alamo makes a very pretty curve about the town, passing on the north side then gracefully flowing southeast into the Rio Grande, so that the town has the river for its northern and eastern boundary. On this little river there are two prominent and well-known fording places, and these are used to this day, just as they were at the time of our story. The banks are very steep and rugged in many places, but constant travel at these crossings keeps them in fairly good condition.

The Texans crossed at the north ford which was called then, as now, El Cantaro (the water bottle). Like everything else in Mexico even this name is surrounded by a halo of tradition. The most credible is: that at this crossing, there once grew a very large huiscache (wee-sache) tree and on the limb of this tree was a fungus growth of remarkable size shaped like a *cantaro* or Mexican water bottle. Another reason has been given for the name: the bottom of the

river is of solid rock and immense holes resembling *contaros* are in the bottom of the stream. Also the town of Mier itself was built upon a limestone hill and there are places dug out of the rock resembling a water bottle.

The Texans entered the town and secured a few supplies, but the Alcalde had failed to give them as much as they had asked for and so without ceremony they took him prisoner. It was when they were fording the Alamo river that one of the Texans asked the Alcalde, "What is this place?"—he, thinking they meant the crossing said: "*El Cantaro*," when the Texans thought he meant the name of the river. The answer was accepted as meaning the river, and to this day all the histories in which this expedition is mentioned, the name of the river Alamo is called Alcantra or Alcantara, when no such name ever existed.

The little town was noted for the blankets which were woven there. In almost every house might be seen the primitive loom for their weaving. There were no great factories with tall chimneys vomiting soot and smoke on the pure air. The people spun their own yarn, manufactured their own bright dyes from the roots or bark of native shrubs and herbs, and the different processes went on in the peaceful environments of home. Nor were they so pressed for time or money that they could not afford to sit at any

time for a neighborly visit, or take a long siesta after the morning's work.

The first settlement and the naming of the pueblo of Mier occurred in 1753 when in honor of its illustrious namesake, Senor Don Jose Sernando Tereza de Mier D. D. delegate to the Spanish Cortes for this section, High Mass was said with great pomp and ceremony to Nuestra Senora de la Immaculada Concepcion de Mier; little did these people dream of the glory that was to fall on this obscure little town.

The following entry in the archives of the town is the only reference that was ever made in its "blue books" upon the Mier Expedition. Viz: "In 1842 a battle was fought between the Mexicans and Texans in this city in which more than three hundred prisoners were taken, and where we saw their pride humbled and all their arms laid at the feet of our brave soldiers. The Mexican Army fought under the command of Brigadier General Don Pedro Ampudia and Colonels Don Romalo Diaz de la Vega and Don Antonio Canales. In this battle three officers were killed: Captain Don Miguel Asnal de Ampudia, first Lieutenant Don Manuel Infantte and a second Lieutenant of Reynosa whose name was unknown."

THE BATTLE.

In all Mexican cities there is a large open square or park, called the plaza, around which the public mercantile buildings are faced, and also where the population gather at night or on festal oc-

casions. The town of Mier had about four thousand citizens at the date of this story, and its military plaza was the center of the city. The Alcalde's office was on the east side of the plaza, and, as it was a military station the government warehouses were in close proximity. Across the plaza on the west were the cathedral and the residence of General Garcia.

To prevent the Texans from reaching the plaza and thus gaining access to the government supplies, the Mexicans placed their cannon at the northeast and southeast corners of the plaza, thus commanding the two streets that led from the east. But the Texans made a line for the northeast street, thus avoiding the fire of the cannon. They forced an entrance into the two buildings on the adjacent sides of the street.

Once inside the shelter of these rock walls, it was only a matter of strength and time to make breaches in the partition with the aid of some crow-bars which they were lucky enough to find.

The cannon kept up an active roar, and, as the balls struck the outer walls of the building, loosened rock and mortar would fall to the pavement below. The Texans promptly utilized these breaks as loopholes from which to rake the enemy with their deadly rifle fire. Near midnight, the last dividing wall was breached, and John found himself within a large building, only fifty yards from the cannon. Captain Cameron had placed his men in the courtyard, and used the heavy wall as a protection for his firing





GLIMPSES OF MIER.

The building on the extreme left was used as Ampudia's headquarters. The old church with the tower at the right is the building in which the prisoners were confined. The siege of Mier occurred on Christmas eve and continued through Christmas day, the surrender taking place at early twilight Christmas day, 1842.

line, while on the left side Captain Reese's and Captain Pearson's companies had forced their way, so that they held the building on the adjacent corner. The best riflemen were picked and stationed so that they could command the position of the artillery. Faithful to his promise, General Green gave the "fire-eaters" a place upon the azotea where better protection would be given them.

"Now boys," said he, "that battery of theirs makes too much noise. You must stop it! It might kill somebody by *accident!*" (The General could always joke.) "Every time you see a man try to load that cannon, take good aim and hit him in the head. Don't fire at the same time, keep cool, and don't quit until you get your orders."

The boys obeyed. From across the street another division was firing. John felt himself in a dream. A horrible dream it was, full of powder stench and flying bullets and cannon balls and groaning men, and over all, the wild shouts of the Texans. That all was motion and excitement he was dimly conscious, but he kept his eyes fixed on the cannon and as his turn came, he steadily took aim and kept his record. He winched when he missed, but the other boy was sure to hit. One hour after daylight the artillery was deserted, for all but five of the gunners were dead, and the five were disabled.

The fighting went steadily on. It was rifle against rifle now. The Texans felt jubilant for they were

better riflemen than their foes. If only their ammunition would hold out till they could make a rush for the warehouse of the government supplies.

Six hours later, and the Mexicans, fearful the Texans might secure the abandoned cannon, were endeavoring *to lasso the big guns*. It was a deadly task, for the luckless head, or hand that came within range of those rifles in the corner buildings. At last they were successful in getting their ropes over the ponderous machine and slowly the cumbersome wheels revolved under the steady pull of the straining arms at the end of the rope, and the "fire-eaters" knew that they might turn their deadly attention to others of the enemy.

Meanwhile on the other side of the river, in the old adobe hut, the right men who were detailed to get poor Joe Berry out of the gulch, were sitting where they could see their comrades fighting. It had taken them sometime to get their unfortunate comrade upon the high ground and to the shelter of the house. Then it had taken their united strength to hold the poor fellow while the Doctor set the broken limb. But they had heard the roar of the cannon and the cracking of the rifle, and they knew the fight was on and they were condemned to uselessness. It was seventeen hours since they had heard the first noise of the battle, and all night long the ground shook with the roaring of the cannon, but, with the coming of day, the firing had grown farther apart, till at last it had

ceased, and only the popping of rifles told them that fighting was still going on.

Poor Joe muttered and groaned in the delirium of fever, and it was hard work to keep him still on the miserable pallet. They could see men on the house tops firing at those below. Long and anxiously had they gazed with the pent-up ferocity of a chained bulldog, with a vagabond just out of reach.

Suddenly they saw a detachment of sixty cavalry-men coming up from the ford. They dashed by the old adobe house unsuspecting, for they were on the lookout for the expected Texan re-inforcement from across the Rio Grande.

When this clanking, glittering band came in range it was more than these men could withstand, reckless of the consequences, with one impulse each reached for his gun and took aim and each brought down a victim.

The cavalry, taken by surprise, scattered in confusion. But alas! another detachment had seen the rash Texans. These had a field-piece. They trained it on the house.

The Texans knew the first shot would crumble the walls to dust. If they ran the house would not be fired on, and Joe might have a chance, while they might, perhaps, gain the river, get over on the other side and join their companions. They made the wild dash but the foe was on the alert, and the three foremost bit the dust never to rise again; Tom Davis and

Joe's brother, Bate, reached the other side dripping and hatless, but bearing their guns in safety, and soon were in the thick of the fighting they had been watching so long.

Dr. Sinnickson and the other two were captured, and they supposed that Joe would be taken to a hospital. What was their horror to see a soldier walk up to the poor fellow tossing in his fever and deliberately stab him, then the three captives were marched over the river to the headquarters of the two Mexican generals.

The battle had gone on steadily on the other side, and John and his companions were now turning their attention to the men on the *azoteas* of the buildings. Captain Cameron and his men had suffered much in the yard and now sent in for re-inforcements. General Green sent as many men as he could spare, for the Mexicans were now coming on the north side of the square, and the news that Colonel Fisher had been wounded, threw more of the responsibility on his shoulders. Still, they knew they were getting the best of the encounter and felt that their wounded was nothing in comparison to the piles of Mexican dead.

"We are beating them!" cried Billie, smearing his grimy face with his ragged sleeve.

"They are getting awful tired," said Orlando.

"What is that for?" exclaimed all of them. The men stared at each other for they heard the sound of

bugles, and then the firing in their rear ceased and silence followed.

The tired men leaned on their rifles, weary but jubilant, so sure were they that the victory was theirs.

Judge of the scene that followed when they found that the Mexicans had demanded their surrender.

Colonel Fisher, weakened from the loss of blood and the lack of food, for they had eaten nothing in twenty-four hours or more was completely disheartened and recommended that they surrender as their ammunition was exhausted and they had no food. He had been associated with General Ampudia and knew him to be an honorable man who would respect the usages of war.

The unfortunate Dr. Sinnickson had been compelled to bring the message under the white flag and could give his comrades no information beyond that contained in the message from the Mexican commanders, for he had not had an opportunity to see how large a force they had at their command. The message from General Canales said:

“We have 1700 regular troops in the city and expect 800 additional in a short time.”

The wildest confusion prevailed among the Texans. One hour was allowed for the truce, and the scene baffled description.

General Green was opposed to any consideration of terms of surrender, and quoted the fate of Colonel

Fannin's men, Captain Reese, Captain Cameron and Captain Pierson also preferred to beat their way to the river with the butts of their guns rather than trust to the honor of the foe. Thus had the actions of one bad man destroyed the faith of the Texans in the honor of the Mexicans. And they were right, for Santa Anna was the head of the government and none dared disobey his orders without facing very unpleasant consequences. There are few people that will run unpleasant risks for those who are not bound by close ties of affection or self-interest. The Texans well knew that no matter what terms the Mexican generals made, Santa Anna would disregard them if he did not approve.

General Green knew that he could expect little or no mercy because he had had some unpleasant associations with Santa Anna's imprisonment while in Texas. Some of the men of the Texas and Santa Fe Expedition had been in Mexico as prisoners before and had been released only a short time.

At last a number decided to do as Colonel Fisher advised. The men opposed, gave way to wildest upbraidings and taunts, but even as they raved they saw their comrades march by and lay down their guns on the pavement.

The order of Capitulation read:

Camp of Army of North, 1st Division.

Viz: Agreeable to the conference I had with Colonel W. S. Fisher, I have decided to grant.

1st. That all who will give their arms will be treated with the Consideration which is in accordance with the Magnanimous Mexican Nation.

2nd. That conformably to the petition which said General Fisher has made me, all persons belonging to the Santa Fe Expedition will receive the same treatment and guarantees as the rest.

3rd. All who desire to avail themselves of these terms will enter the square and there deliver up their arms.

Pedro D'Ampudia.

The note of surrender from Colonel Fisher to General Ampudia read :

Mier, Dec. 26, 1842.

“Sir:”

The forces which through the chances of war, I now surrender to you, are composed of the most valiant and intelligent citizens of Texas. They have contended manfully against your superior force and have yielded only when it was deemed folly longer to contend. Your well established character as a brave and magnanimous officer, is a certain guarantee to me that they will be treated as brave men deserve to be.

I have the honor to be most respectfully yours,

W. S. Fisher, Commanding.

The aggregate number of Texans engaged in this battle was two hundred and sixty-one, their loss being ten killed, twenty-three badly wounded and several slightly. The aggregate number of the Mexican

forces engaged was, twenty-three hundred and forty, composed of the Zapadores battalion, the Yucatan regiment, a portion of each of the 7th and 12th regiments, and the artillery company of sixty men, regulars in all, 1240, also 800 mounted "Defensors" under Colonel Canales and not less than three hundred volunteer citizens. The Mexican report of their loss on the evening of the surrender was 430 killed and 130 wounded.*

But, when General Green realized that a capitulation was the only alternative, he stepped forward and handed his sword to General Ampudia, who in receiving it said: "I appreciate fully, the feelings of the brave, but such is the fate of war. My house and friendship are yours and I hope you will consider yourself my guest and will call upon me for any service in my power." The two Generals then walked together over the field of battle, nothing definite having been known at that time of the mortality. General Ampudia, caught sight of his own beloved son, Don Miguel Arsnal de Ampudia, Adjt. General of the Mexican forces, writhing in the death agony. With choking voice and streaming eyes General Ampudia said; "There, is my own beloved son. He has received a death wound and must soon die, he was the hope of the army, the pride of the service." General Green made an effort to console General Ampudia, saying, "I hope you will accept my sympathy in this your great sorrow, but this is the fate of war. The

* Green's Mier Expedition, page 120.

brave in all ranks share our sympathy.” General Green pays a high tribute to this accomplished young officer, a graduate of Chapultepec Military College, and one who gave pleasure to all who came within the radius of his fine personality.

Later, says General Green: “General Ampudia visited the church with me to see the wounded and carried them many bandages. Drs. Sinnickson, Brenham and Shepard were attending them. All were cheerful, though most of them badly wounded. I have never yet seen a calamity so great befall the Texans as to prevent their making fun, and when I asked them, ‘how are you off for rations,’ they replied: “Oh, we have plenty of brains, General.”

“When the commotion and terror of the siege were over, old Padre Garcia, who was the resident priest at the time, at once began calling troops, the alcaldes, alguacils, and the general faithful to mass for the rest of the souls of the Mexican dead. After mass, the old padre in person inaugurated the *feria*, a fair of eight to fifteen days duration, where dancing, drinking, chicken fights, polos, bull fights and gambling went on with unimpeded success.”

* Page 110 Green's Mier Expedition.



THE
SURRENDER

CHAPTER VII.

THE SURRENDER.

RINDAN *sus armas! Rindanse.*" "(Lay down your arms! surrender.).

A painful silence followed his peremptory command.

One—two—then three of the gaunt, haggard Texans slowly came out of the shadow of the doorway, and, with a glare of stifled hatred at the Mexicans, who awaited their action with ill-concealed interest, reluctantly laid their guns on the pavement, then stepped aside with sullen composure to await their comrades.

One by one the others followed with weary despairing steps, ready even then to retract and fight it out although death be assured. Among the last was Big Foot Wallace, who strode out a powder-stained, grimy giant scowling down at the slender, dark little men who gazed at him with wondering and admiring eyes. He was empty handed having broken his gun in despairing rage, that he should be compelled to repeat the fate that had overtaken his brother, one of the men who had fought with Fannin. It was the murder of this brother that had brought Wallace from his old Virginia home for vengeance.

Behold the end of his vengeance! A lion in a trap.

It was over. Even the Santa Fe men had slowly followed their comrades out to what they considered a certain death.

The Mexicans watched with keenest interest every movement of the Texans. All had laid down their arms save one.

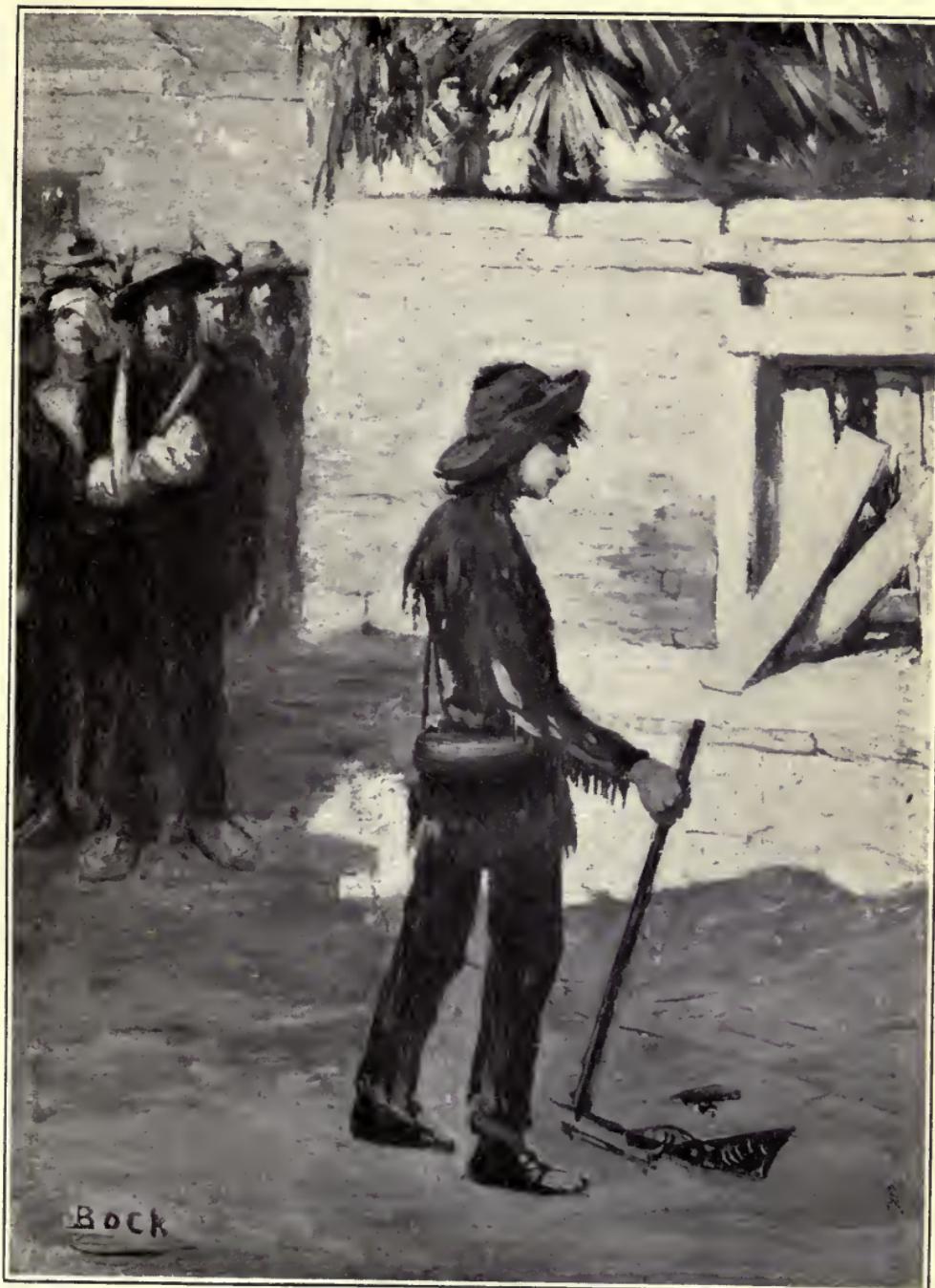
Just one more! A little slender lad stood facing them.

He stood near the doorway. His large dark eyes were eloquent in their appealing look. His lips were drawn back in tense lines over his white teeth. His cheek all grimy with the smoke of powder, lay in mute caress on the barrel of the small rifle that he held in close embrace, even as one who holds a cooing dove.

One moment he stood before the astonished Mexicans a mute figure of despair. Then his eyes flashed fire and defiance and whirling his gun in the air, he skillfully caught it by the barrel and springing forward with the litheness of a panther he struck the upraised weapon with all of his force upon the edge of the stone pavement. The stock fell a splintered wreck leaving the barrel in his hands.

One moment he gazed upon his ruined treasure. Its mission was ended. Between his clenched teeth he muttered: "I've kept my promise."

The gun-barrel fell from his nerveless hands with a sharp clink on the stony edge of the pavement, then rolled into the gutter. With a sudden revulsion of



Painting by Bock

"I've kept my promise"

feeling he turned and leaned against the adobe wall hiding his face on his arm.

A rustle of relaxation went through the tense crowd. Even the haggard prisoners forgot their own misery in the sorrow of their boy comrade. Not a man among them but knew the story of the rifle.

Not so with the Mexicans. Officers and men but dimly guessed the motive that prompted the rash act. To them it was a daring deed of defiance, and coming from one so young it filled them with enthusiastic admiration. A low murmur of sympathy ran through the crowd of soldiers, while exclamations of "*Pobrecito! Pobrecito! El tiene mucho valor.*" (Poor little fellow! Poor little fellow! He has a great deal of courage) came from among them.

The report of the boy's daring deed spread rapidly; he had scarcely fallen back into the pitiful group of prisoners when a special messenger from General Ampudia appeared with a command for the little prisoner to be sent to him immediately.

Poor little hero! To him the command was the forerunner of a death sentence. He had violated the ethics of war. He must pay the terrible penalty.

He gave one last lingering look at his father's face, sunken with fatigue and creased with lines of anxiety and suffering. Poor Jeffrey, who was badly wounded, did not even look at him but hung his head in sick despair. Father and brother both feared the

worst. Past impressions had taught them to expect no mercy from a Mexican.

The eyes of the prisoners followed the little figure as he walked with head erect and rigid composure between his guards.

As he turned the corner and passed from their sight, his father gave a groan which found an echo in every heart of that valiant but vanquished band.



A
LITTLE CAPTIVE

CHAPTER VIII.

A LITTLE CAPTIVE.

WITH unseeing eyes as one in a vision, John walked between his guards. Low murmurs of pity accompanied his progress but they fell upon deaf ears. Neither did he see the pitiful forms that lay along his path, silent and unheeding their foe, as he walked past them, a captive.

His mother's face rose before him. His mother's voice rang in his ears. He should never see her again.

They crossed the grand plaza and entered a large building, John still following the movements of the soldiers with unconscious precision.

In the rear of the spacious *sala grande* of the Garcia Mansion, General Ampudia was seated, a commanding figure enhanced by the splendor of his uniform. Around him were gathered his staff-officers and numerous orderlies, all brilliant in their regimentals. An outer circle of big-hatted soldiers made a fit setting to the gorgeous group.

All eyes were turned on the little figure with its martial escort.

Could this be the defiant captive? *This child?*

* Incidents of this chapter were related by Juan C. C. Hill, hero of the story.

Under the battery of dark eyes the boy stood, a breathing image. The beauty of his face, though marred by the powder-grime, was apparent to all, and they marked the traces of tears. General Ampudia looked long and earnestly at the pathetic little figure. He noted the soiled and ragged garments that bore silent but eloquent witness of the terrible quagmire, the thorny chaparral, long rides under rainy skies with no protection from the weather. One grimy, tanned little hand clutched the remnant of his weather-stained hat, while the other was clenched in a close, beligerent coil, mute sign of defiance.

It is no wonder that General Ampudia, having at that very hour lost his own son, was deeply affected by the appearance of this brave little hero before him.

As the General looked at the young face, pinched and drawn from the lack of food, the loss of sleep, and terrible fatigue and strain of battle, his heart filled with pity. His eyes grew misty as they met the look of despair in the dark eyes of the young captive.

“Mi hijito! (my little son) Do not fear. I shall do you no harm!”

John's mind dulled with fatigue and dazed with apprehension, failed to comprehend. He still stood with a steadfast gaze fixed on the General's face.

“Queridito (dear little one), come nearer, said



General Pedro Ampudia

the General extending his arm. The kindly gesture awoke the boy's bewildered consciousness and with a step forward, he heaved a sigh of relief as he felt the comforting shelter of the protecting arm.

"You are very young to be a soldier. Have the Texans so few men that they must send their little ones to battle?"

"I am no *little one*," said John resentfully, "I am nearly thirteen years old."

"A thousand apologies, *señor*," said the courtly Mexican. "I did not know. It is a manly age. A faint glint of amusement shone in his eyes. A gleam of white teeth and an audible stir in the room as the interpreter translated the foregoing, caused John to look away from the General at the swarthy faces surrounding him. Distrust again seized upon him.

"What is your name *hijito mio?*"

"John Christopher Columbus Hill."

"Juan Cristobal Colon Gil," repeated the General with a faint smile, "And what did you expect to discover in Mexico?"

"I came to fight Mexicans."

"Have you no father?"

"Why yes, he is out there with my brother, Jeffrey," nodding his head in the direction of the plaza.

"Well, how is it when you had a father and brother to send to war that you did not stay with your mother?"

"Why, I came along to take care of father and

Jeff. My other brother, James Monroe, is at home with my mother and little sisters. Besides, it was my turn to fight. James Monroe helped lick the Mexicans at San Jacinto. I was not old enough to go that time, so it was my turn now."

"Were you born in Texas?" asked the General.

"No, sir," answered the boy, "I am a native of Columbus, Georgia. I was the first white child born in that town."

An indescribable look went over the General's face. The boy had forgotten his surroundings.

"Well, Senor Don Juan, the Mexicans are the victors this time. Why did you break your rifle, Juan?"

Under the kindly manner of the courtly gentleman, John's fears had taken flight and, with the artlessness of youth, bred in the straightforward simplicity of frontier life he poured forth the history of the little rifle and its active service at San Jacinto; of his desire to join the expedition, and his mother's reluctance and final consent.

She had prayed all night, said he, and at last it seemed to her that God said, "Let John go, he will help your husband and son." With simple eloquence he told of his brother's gift of the rifle and the solemn charge concerning it. As he finished his recital his tired little figure straightened involuntarily. He threw his head back with an air of pride and his

eyes flashed as once more he exclaimed—"I've kept my promise!"

Life is full of antitheses. The scene in some respects recalls the time when Prince Edward, son of Henry VI, was brought before Edward IV, the usurping King. The Prince on being asked the insolent question as to how he dared to invade the kingdom of Edward IV, replied with the dignity suited to his position, "I came hither to claim my just inheritance." On receiving his answer, the king struck his boy prisoner and youthful rival in the face with his gauntlet, which was the signal for his willing sycophants to dispatch the young Prince with their daggers.

Contrast the action of the ignoble king with the considerateness of the Mexican general.

"Tell me, Juan, are you one of those boys who did such deadly work with Captain Castro's battery?"

"Yes, sir," answered the boy. "General Green put the boys and me with some of the men to pick off the men at the cannon. He told us to take good aim and not miss or the cannon would tear the wall down and kill a whole lot of us. So we were very careful."

"*Of that, my son, I am assured.*" Encouraged by the General's kindly manner, John continued his story of the battle by saying:

"I can count twelve of your men, it may have been fifteen that I picked off with my little rifle; but

I am not sure of but twelve." The boy looked steadily and fearlessly into his questioner's eyes, while the General listened and watched, as only a Mexican can, every expression that flitted across the boy's face, every tone that vibrated in the childish voice.

Courage and truth have no nationality. All the world loves a hero. What wonder that General Ampudia felt that this life was too precious to suffer the mischance of a prisoner of war.

A murmur of astonishment went around the room. It had already been discovered that the men who had belonged to the battery, had been found dead with a bullet hole through the brain. In reflecting on the remarkable skill of the young Texans, it must be remembered that they were forced to learn the use of firearms at a very early age. It was utterly impossible for any settler, old or young, to venture out of reach of his weapons night or day, for he could never know what savages might be lurking near. Deer were so plentiful that herds of them would destroy the crops if careful watch was not kept. Panther, bear, wolf and prowling Indian, made a true eye and steady aim necessary to self-preservation. Ammunition was precious and not to be wasted when the lack of a charge might mean the loss of a life.

The Mexican officers were generally gentlemen of noble descent, but their common soldiers at that period were mostly drawn from the criminal classes and were forced into the service, so it is no wonder

that their marksmanship did not equal that of the Texans. They had neither the training nor incentive that led to such excellence.

The low hum of voices died away at General Ampudia's next question.

“Who were your companions, *hijito mio?*”

“Harvey Sellers, Orlando Phelps, Billie Reese and Gilbert Brush were with me.”

“Repeat the names, Juan, slowly.”

As John repeated the names, General Ampudia wrote a message and beckoning one of his orderlies, gave him instructions in such rapid, smooth flowing sounds that Juan, who had acquired a little “Mexican,” as he called it, was unable to distinguish one word.

But presently the General turned and placing a hand on Juan's head said:

“My boy, you are a brave little fellow and you and your young companions make fine soldiers, because you obey orders. You must be weary. Follow this officer and he will see that you have food and rest.”

On this interview with General Ampudia, our young hero loses his good old American name, John, and will be known through the remainder of the story as Juan, with the prefix Don, according to the custom when addressing one of equal rank, the gentle Latin appellation given him in this, his first interview with his distinguished captor.

Juan opened his lips, faltered, closed them and looked at the General piteously.

“What is it, Juan?”

“My father and Jeffrey, they——” his voice broke.

“They will be cared for. All the men will be fed and sheltered.”

“But they—they think *I am going to be shot!*” gasped Juan.

“Oh no, *hombrecito* (My little man) they shall be told and tomorrow you shall see them. *Haste luego*” (I will see you later.)

When Juan quitted the presence of General Ampudia, in spite of hunger and fatigue, he felt cheerful for youth is buoyant, and he had escaped death by a little. His father was alive and Jeff—yes, Jeff was wounded but it would heal and they would all see mother and home again. Great was Juan’s surprise and pleasure to find Billie, Harvey and Gilbert waiting for him in the apartment to which the orderly led the way.

The boys were too tired to talk over the events of the day and, after washing the dirt and grime from their tired bodies, were glad to eat the bountiful supper served them.

The comfortable cots with their abundant supply of clean linen and blankets, were very enticing to the boys, who had lost so much sleep, and as they knew they would not see their comrades till the next morning, they were soon asleep.

General Green and Colonel Fisher also lodged in the same building and were treated with the courtesy belonging to their rank. General Ampudia was previously acquainted with Colonel Fisher. The terms of the surrender assured the Texans they would be treated with the consideration due to prisoners of war, and that they would be held on the frontier until the two governments could make arrangements for their release or exchange.

Upon request, General Green was allowed to visit the men in their prison, and to procure such necessities for the wounded as he could afford.

He found the men most unpleasantly situated. In one small apartment were crowded not less than one hundred. There was nothing strange about this, as the little town was not prepared for such a large number of prisoners, and from what you have read you will readily agree that they were wise to secure such daring reckless men. But it was natural that General Green should feel resentful and bitter, for he had opposed with all his force, the surrender under any terms, however fair. Nor was his frame of mind improved by seeing the men.

Sam Walker, the bravest, finest scout they had, was captured in the preliminary brush with General Canales' "Defensors" at the ford; and, as he was confined where he had a full view of the battle, he knew the condition of the Mexican forces. He told the unfortunate Texans that they were taken by strategy.

That the Mexicans were defeated and had no expected reserves within call; that the great gates of the cathedral yard were opened and the officers' horses ready, saddled for flight, in case they refused to surrender; that they sent Dr. Sinnickson with the flag of truce because he had not been within their ranks long enough to find out their real condition.

All this was maddening to men who were deprived of their arms and ammunition. The boys could not have slept so soundly had they known it, or how the men were quartered.



ANOTHER KIND OF
COURAGE

CHAPTER IX.

ANOTHER KIND OF COURAGE.*

Poor Juan lay down on his clean, comfortable bed with the unhappy feeling that his father and brother were sleeping on the hard floor, a poor exchange for the soft mesquite grass and the pure air under the starry vault of heaven. Sleep finally came, and he closed his eyes to the painful realities he was powerless to help.

He dreamed that James, his brother, came to him with a sad face and asked him,—“Where is your rifle, John?” and then his dear mother came and looked at him oh, so pitifully and said, “John, take care of your father and brother.” He awoke with a start to find himself in an unfamiliar room with the morning sun shining on the white walls and the three single beds in which his comrades had slept were empty.

The boy looked about for his clothes, but not one garment was to be found. The boys must have had their clothes. An orderly entered the room with an elegant suit of clothes hanging on his arm such as might be worn by a Castillian Prince.

Here was a good roof and a thick wall to keep off the air and dew of heaven. Of what avail to one who enjoyed the bivouac on the ground. Walls for the illimitable space of the plains. Windows for the

* Incidents of this chapter were given the author by Mr. J. C. C. Hill in person.

transparent atmosphere, redolent with purity and vitality.

The little captive gazed about him with somber eyes. He wondered how Jeff felt. He knew the wound was very painful, though Jeff would be sure to say it was nothing. And maybe father had not slept for thinking about Jeff and the trouble they were all in.

He wished he was with the men sharing their hardships, for Juan was the true mettle, he could not fully enjoy the comfortable surroundings, when he thought of his brave companions.

The 26th day of December, 1842, was the turning point of Juan's life. But as is generally the case, he did not recognize this fact till long years had passed. Few would care to face a problem so difficult,—a situation so fraught with delicate considerations as this young boy was called upon to meet. One hour fighting with all the ardor and desperation born of a just cause against an unjust foe. The next hour the recipient of unexpected and undesired kindnesses from the leader of the hated enemy.

It was, at General Ampudia's own table, that Juan ate his breakfast. The General was in the elegant Garcia residence which was furnished with all the luxurious appointments that wealth could purchase. To Juan, who for several months had been living in the savage simplicity of the camp, it was overwhelming in its splendor, and he felt embarrassed and



Juan Christobal Colon Gil

awkward. This feeling soon passed away under the tactful courtesy of the General, who listened with evident enjoyment while Juan related some of the hunting adventures of himself and brothers. The cordial, kindly manner of the General encouraged Juan, and he asked if he might see his father and brother. The General turned his keen black eyes on the slender boy who stood before him. What a contrast to the ragged, pitiful little figure of yesterday, with its powder-grimed face, haggard and pinched from fatigue and anxiety. The dainty white linen, the short black jacket and the red silk sash knotted around his lithe young waist; and in his hand was the finest specimen of a soft felt Mexican sombrero, with its magnificent silver trimmings, which set off his handsome face and figure to great advantage. He might have been of Castillian descent, thought the General, while he gazed with undisguised admiration upon his captive guest.

“*Queridito mio*, you shall see them at once and we will send them some breakfast.” Turning, he issued some orders to the servants; in a few minutes Juan, accompanied by an orderly and followed by two *mozos*, (men-servants) bearing trays, stepped briskly through the big doors across the open space between the Garcia residence and the cathedral, where the wounded men were lying. He looked anxiously around in the dim light of the interior at the various pallets to see which was his unfortunate brother. At

the sight of his father, still haggard and unkempt, his manly composure gave way, and flinging his arms around the beloved neck, he sobbed, "Oh, father! father! father!"

"Hush, Johnnie boy," said his father, tenderly stroking the dark head with loving, tremulous hands. "You'll wake poor Jeff." He glanced at a pallet near by.

"I'm awake," said Jeff. "Don't cry, John. We are all right. I ain't got nothing but a scratch. What you got there, little brother?"

"I brought you some breakfast," said Juan, mopping his eyes and trying to steady his voice as he beckoned the servants with the trays. The *mozos* came forward, openly showing their sympathy in their kind, dark faces. The *mozos* tried to preserve an impassive countenance, but their expressive eyes were strong in silent contradictory eloquence.

While Jeff and his father ate their breakfast, Juan related all that happened since he marched from their sight to meet a death sentence.

"My boy, your mother's prayer is being answered. God has you in His care."

"But, father, I want to be with the rest of you. Here I am in all this silly finery, and look at the rest of you. They took my clothes away from me," said Juan, his voice quivering again, "and I had to put on these."

"Small loss," said Jeff, philosophically. "I wish you could get *me* some like '*these!*' "

"Would you wear them?" asked Juan, who far from feeling any pride in his elegant appearance, was humbled to the earth, that he, John Christopher Columbus Hill, a loyal Texan, should be rigged up in the outfit of a Mexican! He, who had helped the gay Billie revile Mexican costumes, was now arrayed in one of the most ornate of the despised habiliments. It was true that Billie and the other boys were also in Mexican garb, but their degredation was less, as their garments were plainer and more like their habitual garb.

"John," said his father, looking at him kindly, "John, you must not condemn every Mexican for what Santa Anna has done. You saw our men obey General Sommerville, because he was the leader. There were plenty of us yesterday who were not willing to surrender, but our leader, Colonel Fisher, thought it for the best. General Ampudia is an honorable gentleman, I believe, and we know he is a kindly one, you fought well. You were conquered. You expected death and instead you are shown great kindnesses. Accept that kindness in the spirit in which it is given and try to show General Ampudia and the other Mexicans, that a Texan can be brave in more ways than fighting."

Juan listened respectfully and in silence. His

father was not given to homilies, being a quiet man whose deeds were his best sermons.

"But, father, I just wanted to be with you and Jeff. It looks so hard for me to be dressed in fine clothes and eating good things and sleeping in a soft bed when you and Jeff and the others are fixed like this. I promised mother to take care of you!"

"You can help us a great deal more where you are, my boy, than if you were shut up with us. I thank God you have not this to endure. It is the only bright spot in all this trouble!"

"Yes, indeed, John, I am awful glad you are out of it. Father and I are big, strong men; and while you are spunky, you ain't got your growth yet and you cannot stand what we could. We will be kept on the border, Colonel Fisher says, and when we are sent home we don't want to take any little skinny boy back to mother. Eat all you can, little brother, and if you feel lonesome among the Mexicans, why, just think how glad father and me are that we don't have to worry about you. Here comes Dr. Sinnickson to dress my wound. You go on, John."

Jeff was suffering a good deal of pain, but knowing the loving sensitiveness of this beloved younger brother, he exerted himself to deceive the tender dark eyes. He and his father deeply sympathized with the loyal little soul that was grappling with such a novel situation.

"Well, Senor Don Juan, good morning!" said Dr. Sinnickson as he shook hands with John. "You seem to have fallen on your feet, young man," running a critical eye over the elegantly attired young figure.

"He don't think so," said his father with a quiet smile. But Jeff and I feel differently. We would not have this nice breakfast if it were not for his good fortune. Have some of it, doctor?"

"Well, I should say! Why you young scoundrel, you have a gold mine in that good looking young face of yours!"

"There you go!" said John, "always my good looks! A fellow can't help his looks. I wish I was ugly as—"

"As I," said the doctor. "Just so! and where would you be? And what good could you do? Don't be a fool, boy! Every man, Mexican or Texan, knows you can fight. I think maybe they are afraid of you, you young tiger. You go on back and scare them into giving you some good things for these poor lantern-jawed, knock-kneed, crooked-nose, red-headed sinners like myself and Jeff. Go, Don Juan, and attend to those dozen or more funerals that are your own private business, and *don't forget to send us our dinners!*"

"*And the trousers,*" said Jeff.

"See if you can get Jeff some wine, son!" said the father, putting a coin in his hand.

Juan put it back into his father's hand.

"See, father," he said, a red flush dyeing his olive cheeks and slipping his hand in his pocket, he drew forth a handful of coins. See, father, what the General has put in my pocket.

"Get out of here," said the doctor, "before I rob you! Take your minions and depart, Señor Don Juan Christobal Colon Gil!"

"Get my trousers with *pocket linings*, just like yours!" said Jeff.

And Juan departed, but not before he had visited the other pallets where some half dozen men lay wounded.

The interview with his father and brother, and the good humored jesting of the doctor, with its under-current of good advice, put John in a very different train of thought, and when he stepped out of the cathedral door into the light and freshness of the open plaza, a feeling of gratitude rose from the depths of his heart.

Across the plaza he could see the scene of yesterday's battle. The bells of the cathedral were tolling solemnly for the souls of these bodies, the souls that were in another land and would return no more.

"And I might have been one of them!" said Juan to himself. After all it might be as well to make the best of it, as Dr. Sinnickson has done. The doctor had been captured the day before and then forced to carry the white flag to his comrades, with the demand

for their surrender. He was not whimpering. He was going around cheerfully and helping the sick and having a pleasant smile for everybody.

"So will I," thought John, and turning a beaming smile on the dark-eyed soldier who was his guard, he jingled his coin and said in his best Mexican: "*Quiero comprar vino.*" (I wish to buy wine.)

A broad smile that displayed every tooth in the full red-lipped mouth, greeted his effort at Spanish, but whatever his opinion of Juan's accent, the Mexican understood the remark and soon the wine and trousers were purchased. After delivering these purchases, Juan returned to his apartment, where he found Billie and the other boys disporting themselves on the upper balcony that overlooked the patio.

Billie was in high glee. He had seen General Green and the General had told him the best joke on the Mexicans.

"Yesterday after they were through fighting, and General Green and Colonel Fisher were fixing up the papers about the surrender, General Ampudia said he was going to send the cavalry after the men we left with the horses; and he said that Colonel Fisher better send one of our men with them to tell them to surrender and come back with the cavalry, so there need be no fighting."

"Billie, that is one of your yarns," said John severely.

"Gospel truth! Ain't it, Harvey?"

"Uh-hu! I reckon Ampudia thought they was too bashful to come without an invitation!"

"He must think they are fools! Free and on the other side of the river, with all the horses and their guns, to come over here and *give themselves up as prisoners!*"

"That is what General Green and Colonel Fisher thought, but they only said they hardly thought the men would do it. General Green asked if he might send Sailing Master Lyon after his papers and his journal. He wanted *to secure his valuable maps, et settorys*, especially the *et settorys*. So General Ampudia was awful polite about it, and Sammy Lyon was sent with the cavalry to call the boys *to take supper with us* and bring all their baggage with them, as they were invited for a long visit!"

"Of course they just broke their necks to get here in time," said John, derisively.

"Yes, they was so tickled, when they got the invite that they started for home on a dead run to tell their folks about it."

"What did they do, sure enough, Billie? Quit joking."

"Why, old Lyon has got a voice on him like a bull; that is why General Green sent him. He is used to roaring orders at sea in a high wind. When they reached the river, the captain of the cavalry did not want to scare them *before they got their orders*, so he held in his men behind the chaparral and told Lyon

to holler across for the boats. Lyon, he gets as near as he can, then he yells: "Boys, we are all prisoners! There are several hundred cavalry close by in pursuit of you. Take all the good horses and put!"

"And they put!" said John, enthusiastically.

"You bet. A jack rabbit would be plum dizzy trying to keep ahead of 'em!" said Harvey.

"But the General's papers and maps? Did he get them?"

"It was the *et settorys* the General was worried over. The *et settorys* are safe on their way and I guess those maps of the General's is in their heads! So everything is safe."

Account is taken from "Green's Mier Expedition."



PRISONERS START TO
MATAMORAS

CHAPTER X.

PRISONERS START TO MATAMORAS.

IT was New Year's day and they were marshalled into line to start. The sun shone bright, and although the Texans had lived through so many terrible experiences—the last being their surrender, they were more cheerful than might have been expected. Relying upon the promises as given by General Ampudia, they would soon be exchanged, then home to wife and children.

The prisoners had attracted much attention from the common people, and the women had shown them many little kindnesses, in the way of gifts of goods. Themselves poor, they were full of sympathy for the ragged men. If they regarded them as filibusters or brigands, it was a compliment, since none were more honored among the peasants than the 'ladrones' who made the roads of Mexico a path of terror to the wealthy traveler.

Don Domingo Mericio was Italian by birth, but had resided in Mier for a long time. He kept a little inn that was very popular, not only for its excellent cuisine, but for his very pretty daughters. The fame of their beauty and charm extended far and wide. It was in his house that the Texans had intrenched themselves, the family having fled, and its battered

walls and the bullet holes in the iron plates of the massive doors bore evidence of the fierce fire the Mexicans had poured upon it.

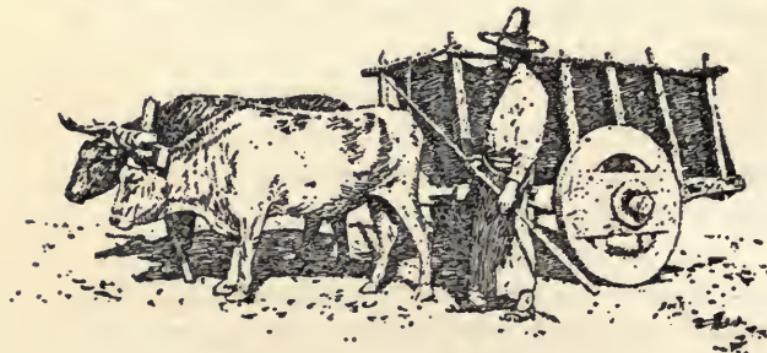
“Lyon! There’s the Alcalde!” shouted a young man.

“By me soul! I ain’t seen the craft since he cut his cable and drifted off in the fog Christmas night!” said Sailing-Master Lyon.

“He’s been hid out in the chaparral, Sammy. He was afraid General Green would want to go home with him and share his bed.” Joyful roars greeted this sally, and the Alcalde disappeared, judging rightly that he was the cause of the mirth.

The little town of Mier wore an appearance of bustle and excitement utterly foreign to her usual sleepy calm. Strange were the people and their ways. Whatever business they had, it was not allowed to distract their attention from the interesting spectacle of the military and their luckless captives.

Despite their forlorn condition the prisoners were



amused and entertained with the many strange people and things that the surrounding country had sent in to see them take their departure. Those towering, squeaky, ponderous carts, known then as "Carretas de Rueda de Panocha" (noisy carts with pancake wheels), were of especial interest to the Texans. The wheels were made of three pieces of timber morticed together, the tires being of rawhide. These wheels were the only ones known in this section until the arrival of General Taylor's army in 1846. These carts piled high with corn and golden pumpkins, came groaning and creaking on their ponderous wheels filling the air with discordant squeaks and shrieks that would have thrown an American ox into a panic. But these sleek, Mexican bovines moved in slow, majestic calm, and when the drivers stopped in order to participate in the general excitement, and the hideous noises ceased, each yoke or pair fell instantly into that sleepy meditation that belongs to the cud chewers; a natural proceeding, since there were six or eight of them to do what an ordinary pair of oxen should pull without any trouble, and no yoke to tire their necks, for they were fastened with rawhide thongs which were passed around their big, wide-spread horns and attached them to their clumsy load.

This was indeed a pitiful New Year's procession that was ready to leave Mier and go on to the military headquarters of General Ampudia.

To the ragged Texans who for five days had been closely confined in buildings, the return to the fresh air and the blue sky was not unwelcome, although the long tramp through a country, the abomination of desolation; but whatever they felt in their hearts, no complaints crossed their lips, and the usual laughter and merry gibes went on, as two by two they stood captive, ready to move forward between the files of infantry, who with bayonets set, guarded either side. The cavalry were to protect the infantry on the outside of the columns, and with cavalry as van-guard, and rear-guard, the unfortunate Texans were about to begin their journey toward Matamoras.

Groups of men were squatted at ease on the ground watching with indolent interest the maneuvers of cavalry in their gay uniforms; pretty girls and withered old women passed on their way to the cathedral and gazed from out of their *rebozos* at the busy, noisy crowd.

Busy and noisy it was indeed. The vendors of fruit and dulces, tamales, chile-con-carne and other edibles, such as guisado, candied fruits, pumpkins, *pilloncilla*, and the inevitable tortilla, were working their way among the throng calling their wares. The officers were calling out stentorian orders to their sandaled troops. The cavalry made a most musical jingling with their silver-mounted bridles, their short swords, and their enormous spurs. The beauty of their horses was most striking, though, perhaps, some

of it was due to the splendor of their trappings. The saddles were veritable works of art, the leather carvings being of infinite delicacy of design and execution. The bridles and bits were mounted with silver or gold, and their huge spurs, the very acme of cruelty, were gilded instruments of torture. The officers themselves were pleasing to look at, for their uniforms were bright in color and gay with silver and gold, braid and lace, and their hats filled the boys with astonishment; that any man should be willing to put on so strange a head-covering was a problem. Perhaps the Mexicans may have felt the same when they saw the coon-skin caps that some of the Texans wore.

Our boy friends, however, were not overcome with the serious aspect of the situation, and their bright eyes were quick to detect every amusing object.

Seeing that each officer had one or more *burros* for his own individual effects, struck them as being very funny. Observing that the boys were watching the loading of the burros with keenest interest, Captain Castro went near to explain about the peculiarities of the burro.

He told them that when the *arriero* was ready to start, that each little mule knew his particular burden and would always walk up to it in the morning and wait patiently to be loaded. Sometimes a newcomer would get confused among so many loads, but the others always kicked it, if it came near them and so it soon learned its own burden. The meek little

burros looked very ludicrous, even to those who pitied them for their huge burdens. Billie found it amusing to try to make an inventory of the contents of one load, but gave it up.

Captain Clement Castro was the commander of the unfortunate battery that the boys had "taken care of." It would be impossible to analyze Juan's feelings as he came in daily contact with this gallant young Mexican, who elicited admiration and affection from all within the radius of his charming personality. Even General Green was loud in the praises of Captain Castro; a most flattering tribute under existing circumstances, for the General was not in the mood to recognize anything pleasing in Mexico or its people.

Captain Castro was outspoken in his admiration of the boys, who had fought bravely, and never seemed to feel resentment at the loss of his men. If Juan had known from what class the rank and file of soldiers were drawn at that time he would not have been so puzzled at the indifference to their deaths. Neither could the democratic little American from the frontier understand the feelings of one who was the product of centuries of caste and prejudice. The loss of life in the Texan ranks meant the loss of a friend or near kinsman, perhaps, and in any case, it meant as much to the officer as it did to the men, for he was one of their number, elevated to his rank by their vote.

"I bore a charmed life, my little friend, or you would have finished me too," said Captain Castro with a smile.

"If I had known you," said Juan gravely, "I could not have fought the artillery so hard as I did."

In those days no such thing was known as great, towering ambulances drawn by spirited mules, in which the officers might ride over this dreary stretch of 160 miles to Matamoras, but all, even the great generals, were mounted upon fine, sleek horses.

The famous Zapadores military band, still at this date one of the grandest in Mexico, accompanied this unfortunate procession. At all the towns through which they passed glad strains of martial music mingled with the enthusiastic rejoicing of the people.

General Ampudia had promised Juan he would give his father a horse to ride, and Juan had come over to the prison early to assure himself that his father was really provided with a horse. Jeff was still unable to march, and he, with other wounded men, was left in the hospital under the care of Dr. Sinnickson. When their wounds would permit, they were to join their comrades at Matamoras, where all were to be held until released or exchanged for Mexican Captives.

But all the gayety of those brave men could not dispel the haggardness of their countenances, the raggedness of their clothing or the dilapidation of

their shoes. When Captain Cameron and his cowboys came swaying out on their high-heeled boots, Juan felt a lump rise in his throat, for he knew well how ill-fitted for a long tramp, were those heels made to steady a man, when riding in the stirrup to rope a wild and angry steer.

Captain Reese was looking pale and stern, for he had little faith in the promise of General Ampudia, or any other Mexican. Orlando greeted the boys with a cheerful "Hulloa" that roused a spirit of resentment in Billie's breast.

General Ampudia signed for Juan to ride beside him, and the boys and the Texan officers were assigned to places in the rear with Captain Castro.

Between the glittering line of bayonets, unused to walking and weak from the confinement in close quarters and the lack of regular exercise, the prisoners plodded wearily on; tired and thirsty; they could not halt, for they must reach Camargo by night.

Perhaps it was not from any real inhumanity on the part of the Mexicans. The Texans were men who laughed at danger and hardship. How were their captors to know their sufferings from tender feet used to a stirrup and unaccustomed to the stones and sand of a rough trail.

A sudden silence fell on all and the tramp of many feet, the beat of the horses' hoofs, the clanking of bits and the jingling of spurs, were all the sounds on the still air.

The little town of Mier was soon left behind, and bare and brown the country stretched away, until the eye reached the sky line and wandered over the sapphire dome only to return wearily to the desolate brown earth.

Through the bare hills, the road wound in and out. The only vegetation was the stunted clumps of thorny vines and shrubs that made the dreadful chaparral, and the inevitable cactus that increased in height as they journeyed toward the south. The loose sand drifted in waves across the road, if road it could be called, for with every windstorm, the sand shifts its base, and the traveler must seek a new path; nothing more wearing to a poor beast can be found than the journey through the loose sand into which it sinks up to the fetlocks. Mile after mile of the road passed beneath the hoofs of the horses and Juan sat loosely in the saddle, his thoughts turning to his mother; to poor Jeff, fever-stricken and pain-racked; to his dear sisters; and then by some strange caprice to Big Foot Wallace, whom he had seen that morning, towering like Saul above his comrades. A smile crept over his face. Again he saw the swarthy little vendors of fruits and dulces pass up and down the line of men calling their wares. He remembered he had seen Big Foot look down into the trays borne upon their heads, and when they passed he raised his arm and reaching with a long sweep, gathered up a gigantic handful and divided spoils with his near

comrades, while the unsuspecting merchant went on plaintively calling his wares. Mexicans and Texans alike enjoyed the joke and watched eagerly for the next victim; nor did their countrymen warn them of the pilferer.



Desolation.

Then his mind dwelt on Orlando, whom he loved, and to his home company headed by Captain Eastland, who was so brave and quiet. Face after face of the men with whom he had been sharing every vicissitudes passed before his mind. Why should he have been separated from them? There was no answer to this inward reflection.

A stumble of his horse as it struck a rough place awoke General Ampudia to his surroundings; through his half-closed eyes he studied the pensive face opposite as it stared from under the broad brim of the sombrero. There was a pathos in the beautiful dark eyes, in the droop of the tender mouth. The half slouched position of the little figure that thought itself unobserved was in itself a revelation of inward de-

spair; and so the General read it.

It was the first time that Juan had given rein to his feelings for he had been bravely living up to the proud example of fortitude and cheerfulness set by his unfortunate comrades. But the lonely road, the isolation from his young companions, and the drowsiness of the General had all tended to throw him into a sad train of thought.

General Ampudia felt his heart yearn toward the little captive; but a keen student of human nature, he had soon discovered that nothing could wound this proud young soul so deeply as to treat him as a child. He opened his eyes and gave a loud yawn. As by magic the young figure straightened in the saddle.

"The country is barren, desolate, *tiresome*," the General smothered another yawn.

"Its worse than coming down the river on the other side," said Juan. "Chaparral is bad to ride through, but you are sure to stay awake. On the plains the chaparral isn't so thick, but riding through the mesquite thickets make you think you're going through a peach orchard," continued he. "Prickly pear's as thick as it is on the Texas side of the river, can't see any good it can be to any living thing."

"Here," said the General, "the cattle eat it, but it is first thrown into the fire and the thorns burned off —after that the cattle keep fat on it. What would you be doing if you were at home?"

"I guess I'd hunt, work on the farm, ride after cattle, might go to school a little—not any schools in the Republic yet—father says it'll be a long time before there'll be schools or colleges there—I never thought much about an education till we got to San Antonio. We camped at Mission Concepcion. There were some words over the door. I did not know what they meant, and I tried to find out——" a dreamy look stole in his eyes, and he relapsed into silence.

"Did you find out the meaning?"

"Oh, yes; among our men there were plenty to tell me. There were men that had graduated at Harvard, Yale and the University of Virginia; there were several from Oxford, that is in England you know. The Germans, they know most everything. Lots of the men don't like them, but I think they were awful nice. Heaps of them knew." Juan heaved a little sigh. In spite of all the sadness, he had rather a pleasant time. General Ampudia's generosity had given him many hitherto unknown pleasures, and being a healthy, normal youth, he did not waste his time, in vain regrets over what could not be helped. He knew that his father had one of these nice blankets, and a horse to ride, and he felt quite cheerful only that he knew Jeff must stay behind. The thought grieved him very much for he might never see him again.

They halted at a *hacienda* (farm) for their noon-day rest. It was the usual collection of adobe houses

all built around a hollow square. The big double doors were always kept closed, but there was a porter who watched it by day and locked and barred it at night; thus rendering the house within, secure from wild beasts and the dreaded ladrones. There was a small stream of water that flowed through the *hacienda*, and over it the cottonwood trees and the ever graceful retama and mesquite cast a pleasant shade. Very tall and beautiful they seemed over the low mud roofs of the *hacienda*.

One of the strangest sights the boys noticed in this *hacienda* was two men drawing water from a well.

A rope, as long as the well was deep, was fastened about one man's waist; this was suspended to a pulley and then the bucket of water was raised by the man running the length of the rope, when the other emptied the water into a reservoir for that purpose. They were told that for six months each year cattle were watered in this way.

AT
CAMARGO

CHAPTER XI.

AT CAMARGO.

THE Texan officers and the boys were lodged at Don Trinidad's, a popular hotel of the town, and could find no fault with their treatment. The house was the usual type of the well-to-do Mexican's residence. The rear of the house opened on a beautiful garden and orchard and the boys enjoyed the fine orange trees very much. A *moro* brought them chocolate and milk and some nice rolls before they were out of bed.

"I feel like I was home!" said Billie with a benignant smile. "Orlando would turn green if he could see this. I heard him say he wished he could wake up in the morning and see his darkey bringing him his coffee.

Soon after, in company with Captain Castro, the boys went for a stroll about the little town. It was a pleasant place, and they would have enjoyed it very much, indeed, under different circumstances. The streets were full of people, and Juan, remembering that it was New Year, thought perhaps they were going to celebrate the holiday with some especial festivities.

As they neared the plaza, a sound of cheering was heard down one of the streets that led to the river. Juan saw Captain Castro stop, half turn, and give

a puzzled, hesitating glance at General Green; then he seemed to be asking a question which was inaudible to Juan, but the answer he heard—— “Certainly not! We wish to see everything!” General Green threw his shoulders back and carried his head high.

“General Green has got a chip on his shoulder!” said the sharp-eyed Billie. “Let’s step up and see if anybody dast knock it off!”

“It ain’t much to have a chip on your shoulder when you aint got your gun with you!” said Harvey with a grin, but before the boys could get near enough to hear the General, the appearance of a mob of children, leaping and dancing in great glee at the head of a procession, diverted their attention.

High above the heads of the shouting, grimacing throngs they saw a long motto stretched between two poles carried by young men.

On it was printed in large letters

“GLORIA Y GRATITUD al BRAVO
CANALES!”

A little farther back was still another

“ETERNAL HONOR al IMMORTAL
AMPUDIA!”

The boys needed no interpreter for these obnoxious mottoes.

Crowds of people were filling up on either side. Fire-crackers were popping, the bells of the cathedral were ringing gaily, the band was playing martial music, and “vivas!” rent the air for the triumphant

Mexican Generals. It was a great day for Camargo. They had had sufficient time to notify the country that a *feria* would be held in honor of the great victory at Mier. The good padres took much care to provide amusement for their flocks, and this was merely the preliminary to a general jollification. Feasting, drinking, gambling, dancing, cock-fighting, horse-racing, and many other amusements, would be carried on for two or three days.

Silent and stoical, the Texans marched between their guards around the open plaza, mid the ringing of bells, firing of an old anvil instead of a cannon, and the popping of crackers, while the dogs barked and yelped hysterically at the unwonted excitement, and the people laughed and screamed and cheered, wild with enthusiasm.

But, though the crowd was noisy, they did not try to insult or hurt the captives, and, when the latter were safely lodged in the three buildings allotted to their use, they dispersed good naturally to the many diversions awaiting them.

The boys no longer cared to avail themselves of the privileges of parole, and, retracing their steps to Don Trinidad's, took refuge in the privacy of the garden. They had no desire to participate in festivities based on their own humiliation. Billie and Harvey talked vigorously out under the orange trees. Whenever they paused, Gilbert started them afresh

by recalling to mind some detail of the procession particularly galling.

Juan sat silent wondering what would happen next, a human paradox. To the eye he presented the appearance of a high born young Mexican on whom Dame fortune had lavished her choicest gifts; when in reality he was a fierce young Texan, ready that minute to join his comrades in a desperate break for liberty.

But it is a strange fact that eating has a soothing effect on the normal mind and as the boys munched the good oranges, the luscious juices acted as a quieting potion and reluctantly to themselves they admitted that, perhaps it might be only a natural thing to rejoice over the capture of an enemy and the people did not know how it was done any way; so when a good old woman brought them some little cakes and sweets, they smiled on her like the real nice boys that they were, instead of scowling like vanquished warriors; and she smiled amiably back at them. Her long, black hair fell in neat braids over her bare brown shoulders, from which the *rebozo* kept slipping in a careless fashion; and they soon grew used to the sight of bare legs beneath the short skirts, nor did they notice the little children of either sex, nude or only with one garment, so quickly does one become used to customs.

The next day the march was resumed in much the same order as when they left Mier. Juan had only

a few minutes each day with his father, Mr. Hill being with the prisoners, although he was mounted and rode with the cavalry.

It was a bitter humiliation for the Texas prisoners to tramp between the cheering masses of the streets of Camargo. But it was an experience that grew familiar as it was repeated at every town through which they passed on their way to Matamoras.

General Ampudia rode at the head of the staff with his boy captive by his side, and they made a fine appearance with the showy, handsome uniforms they wore. The General bowed gracefully to the people in acknowledgement of their "vivas," and smiled genially on the crowd. The sight was galling to General Green, who had vehemently opposed the surrender at Mier. As for Colonel Fisher, he had not only to suffer this humiliation, but he also knew how bitterly many of the officers and men felt toward him. He was now in a position to appreciate General Sommerville's dilemma. It sometimes takes more courage to carry out disagreeable commands in the face of popular opinion than to charge an enemy. Let him who covets the glory of leading, count first the pains of disaster; then if his desire still remains, he is truly a great man.

Both General Sommerville and Colonel Fisher did what they conceived to be their duty. Each had ardent adherants, and each had active opponents. Both were honorable, brave men.

While officers and men felt the indignity of their position, yet they managed to conceal their feelings under a sullen composure; but Billie swelled with rage and mortification and kept poor Harvey and Gilbert in an agony of apprehension for fear he would be over-heard and sent back with the prisoners. Only the stern silence of the Texan Commanders kept him within bounds.

Poor Juan found himself in a strange predicament. Sorrow, shame, and rage alternately rose within him and in his struggle to maintain his composure he stared moodily ahead, looking neither to the right nor to the left. The cries of the people were unintelligible to him, save that he knew they were cheering General Ampudia, and he attributed the smiles and covert glances of the officers of the staff toward himself to their desire to see how he bore the ordeal. His handsome face with its proud, firm mouth, his dark eyes eloquent as their own, his ease and grace in the saddle, his seeming indifference to their hearty cheers, all convinced the people that the handsome little caballero was General Ampudia's own son: and the General was not displeased. He thought of his own beloved son whose life passed out at Mier. Perhaps it strengthened the growing desire to benefit this little captive. Luckily no one enlightened Juan as to his part in the ovation until Camargo was far behind.

The prisoners moved very slowly. Their feet were

much swollen from the march from Mier. It is said that a native Texan will chase a horse five miles in order to saddle him for a ride of half a mile. Although this may be an exaggeration, it is not far from true; it should be said that they always keep one horse saddled for emergencies. At the end of ten miles it became evident that the prisoners were unable to make the usual march, so they were quartered at a ranch, and as there were no buildings large enough to house so many men, they were turned loose in a corral (cow pen) a large yard enclosed by high and thick pickets of timber whose lower ends were set deep in the ground while the upper extremities were bound by rawhide strips to horizontal timbers. Disgusting as this was, there were many of the young Texans who bravely looked on the humorous side of it. They dropped on all fours and pawed the earth and bellowed like bulls. Cows lowed and calves bleated for refreshments. The poor Mexican soldiers on guard were first amazed, then frightened at the strange antics of their charges. They thought the prisoners had gone mad; but when the meaning of the performance dawned upon them they laughed so heartily that the Texans would have found it an easy matter to have overpowered them and made their escape; however, the opportunity passed and the poor boys had to make the best of the filth and vermin incidental to such a place.

All along the weary march the Texans were quar-

tered in these sheep or cattle corrals. General Thomas Jefferson Green kept his diary of events and records with a smile and a tear, and sometimes an oath, their varying fortunes and their unvarying fortitude.

War is always horrible and one cannot expect to find the captive enemy lodged in luxury or exempt from hardships. That Juan C. C. Hill was a singular exception to the rule, is what makes this true tale like fiction.

Riding with the General and his escort, he could but admire the courtly manner of the Mexican officers, nor could he resist their genial ways. Some of them could speak a little English and he found himself acquiring some every-day Spanish with a quickness that delighted the warm-hearted Captain Castro.

It was at Reynosa that the boys forgot their chagrin, although the preparations to greet the victorious army were unique as well as extensive. There



▲ Cattle Corral.

were many triumphal arches made of reeds bound together, and poverty or simplicity had decorated them with gayly colored handkerchiefs, shawls and even bright colored petticoats had been pressed into this unusual service. Appropriate mottoes were suspended from these arches; but that which filled the boys with amusement and made even the footsore prisoners laugh, were the fantastic demonstrations of the Careese Indians. General Green wrote of it in his journal and the description is so excellent that it is literally quoted:

“ * * * * Just as we entered town, riding in company with General Ampudia and staff, the warriors of the Careese tribe of Indians, naked, with the exception of the breech-clout and painted after their war fashion, suddenly popped into our path, at the same time giving the warwhoop, and firing their guns in our faces. Then suddenly wheeling off to reload, the same maneuvers were repeated several times. This excited mirth rather than surprise, and was followed by something more ridiculous still! About twenty little boys between the ages of ten and fifteen, were led by a little old man of sixty, who was no larger than a boy of twelve years old, all most fantastically dressed with different colored handkerchiefs and ribbons fixed about them, with small mirrors fastened upon their heads so as to form an obelisk of four sides. Each held in his hand a long handled gourd, decorated with blue and yellow paper,

with small gravel inside. They were attended by several fiddlers and suddenly appeared before us, led by their old leader, dancing in regular time to the music, first upon one foot and then upon the other. They so contrived that while one foot was hopping to the music, the other was shaking to it, and the long-handled gourd and pebbles of each kept good time with the fiddlers and the motion of the little old man.

He would lead his little band close to our horses' heads, and as we advanced, by motion of his arms, his double file of juveniles would wheel to right and left, precede us thirty or forty yards, and perform the same maneuvers over, always keeping time, in step and motion. Thus were we danced to our quarters about half a mile."

The amusement caused by these unique manifestations of joy was shortlived with General Green if not with the other Texans. Much to his disgust they were all taken to mass at the cathedral, and this custom was faithfully observed at every cathedral town on their line of march.

There was very little religious toleration at the date of this story, and the antagonism that raged between the Roman Catholics and Protestants was deep-rooted in hereditary prejudice.

Juan came of a family whose religious convictions were fervent and genuine. Yet he could but respect the evident sincerity of the Mexicans, who knelt to

the Holy Mother and implored her beneficent approval and protection.



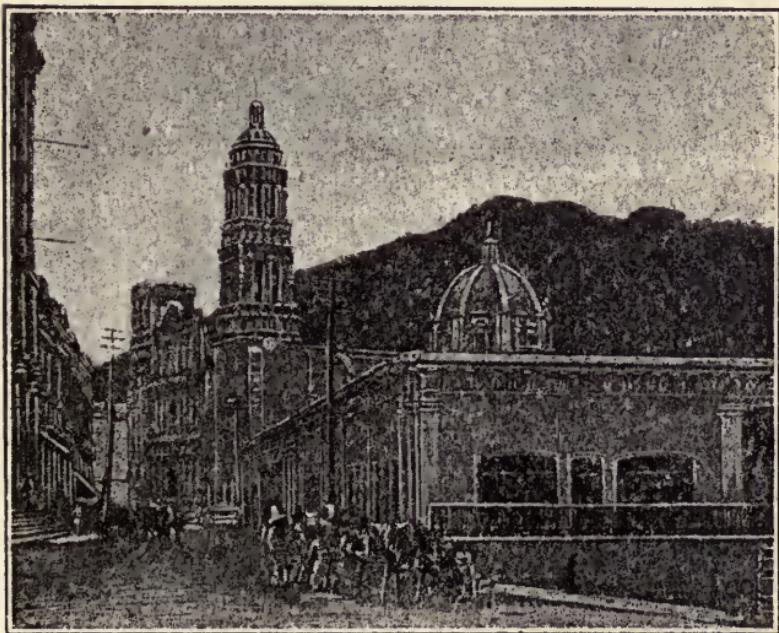
ARRIVAL
AT MATAMORAS

CHAPTER XII.

ARRIVAL AT MATAMORAS.

LONG before General Ampudia and General Canales reached Matamoras, they were met by coaches filled with enthusiastic friends and admirers anxious to be the first to congratulate the returning victors. Happy wives and sweethearts, too, hastened to greet their loved ones for a large proportion of the soldiers were from Matamoras.

Alas! the victory of the Mexicans had cost them



Headquarters of General Ampudia at Matamoras.

dear, for hundreds of men had lost their lives that fatal Christmas night and the day following. Many a woman wept out her heart's sorrow before the crucifix that night, that had thought to tread the gay fandango with her hero.

Matamoras is some thirty miles from the mouth of the Rio Grande and being on the border of Mexico and Texas, was a military station. The city presented a bright and bustling scene with its elaborate gala day dress of flags, streamers and garlands. Numerous triumphal arches spanned the streets through which General Ampudia and General Canales passed. Long lines of military drawn up on either side of the road, and, as the columns of the returning troops with their ragged captives passed on their way to the cathedral to attend high mass, they in turn fell in ranks behind the victorious army, thus making quite an impressive procession.

After the mass, the two Texan leaders, their aides and the four boys were taken by Captain Castro to General Ampudia's headquarters; but the main body of the prisoners were paraded through the principal streets in order that the populace might appreciate the large number of captives taken at Mier.

As the boys rode to their quarters they could hear the huzzas of the people; could see the lovely women waving their snowy handkerchiefs and fans at the elegant officers on their proud stepping horses, who with easy grace sat in their beautiful saddles, the

very personification of romance and chivalry, sweeping courtly acknowledgements with their hats to the plaudits of their admirers. Poor, poor Texans!

That night a great ball was given which all of the Mexican officers with General Ampudia attended, and so a strange officer had charge of the Texans. About half-past nine a detachment of soldiers came to General Ampudia's headquarters and took General Green, Colonel Fisher and their aides, Murray and Lyon, and hurried them away to an empty room in an old barrack, there locked them up securely, and placed a guard over them. This was an outrage for these officers were on parole.

Filled with wrath at the wanton violation of their privileges, General Green managed to write a note of remonstrance to General Ampudia at this uncalled for outrage and unkind violation of their terms of surrender.

Some hours later they were released and carried back to their original quarters. It was an eventful night.

In the gayly decorated ballroom the myriad wax candles of the immense chandeliers threw radiance over a lovely scene. Light, love and laughter, the fragrance of flowers; sparkling eyes more brilliant than the jewels on the raven hair and more dangerous than the Texans' rifles. The officers returned the battery with fiery glances fully as dangerous to the fair foe, and the brave civilians in their

evening costumes of black set off the gorgeous bouquet of lovely dresses and bright uniforms.

Stately and calm and beautiful the highbred dames sat and watched their lovely daughters, exchange confidences behind their fans, or chatted graciously with the gentlemen who hovered near. The dainty satin slippers of the señoritas tripped in unison with the dancing pumps of their partners as the languorous witching music of the Mexican band filled the air with its intoxicating sweetness. Paderewski says there are *two* races *born* musicians: The Gypsy and the Pole. All others have acquired their music. Paderewski should have made it three: the Mexicans.

Conspicuous among the gay throng was General Ampudia. A Polish gentleman of patrician decent, his smiling face and gay demeanor gave little token of the storm that must have raged within. His orders awaited him on arrival at Matamoras. They were briefly summed up in the following: "All Texan prisoners captured at Mier to be forwarded *immediately*, via. Monterey to the City of Mexico. *The Texan leaders to be sent in advance as hostages for the good behavior of the men.*"

Meanwhile only a few blocks away were the unhappy causes for all this gayety. The tired men were glad their long march was over. But they were hungry, for although they were furnished food, it was not the kind to which they had been accustomed and did not seem to satisfy their hunger. Their

anxiety about their homes as well as the uncertainty of their own futures, gave them plenty to think about. The Texas soldiers were many of them land-holders, not a few of them had many slaves, all of them regarded themselves as the peers of any in their country, and they could not understand this petty pilfering.



The prison they were in was very dark, for there was only one window with heavy iron bars. The great door was locked and barred and outside two sentinels shuffled slowly back and forth in their sandaled feet at intervals calling the hated '*Centinela alerta!*'

The Texans had been divided in three sections and were quartered in different prisons; in the inky darkness of their cells, with nothing but the floor for a couch, they planned to make their escape; for these

men were not on their parole like their officers. Many of the men understood Spanish and they had already gleaned enough information to feel sure that they were not to remain at Matamoras, but were to be taken somewhere in the interior.

"They know they can't keep us here," said one of the men, "It's too near home and besides there are too many Americans here. Boys, we ought never to have surrendered. It was a mistake. We must break loose before they carry us away from the border. Here we have friends and can easily get over the Rio Grande into our own country. How many are for trying it?"

Some of them, while more than willing to make the attempt, were held back by fear that the lives of General Green and Colonel Fisher would be forfeited. Long and late did the discussion last and no definite plan or decision was reached.

Through the window came the sound of singing; a group of soldiers off duty were carrying a part-song, and their voices blended sweetly and harmoniously. It was only a little catch or glee in praise of Santa Anna. The prisoners had often heard it sung before but tonight it had a joyousness that struck with painful intensity on their aching hearts and they sank into silence but not into slumber. There were too many fleas for that.

Singing voices, violin and guitar were wafted on the strong Gulf breeze that blew in the open window

of Juan's sleeping apartment. The streets were bright from lighted houses and noisy with footfalls of pedestrians, clatter of hoofs, and rolling wheels. Firecrackers were popping and rockets shot like fiery serpents across the night sky and mimic constellations burst frequently into brief splendor, then vanished, to be succeeded by other beauties equally brilliant and as evanescent.

Across the street they could see into the gambling saloon evidently run by an American. The floor was covered with sawdust and nail kegs served for seats, but the long counter behind which a glittering array of bottles and glasses lined bravely up on either side of a mirror, gave a specious brilliancy to the scene. From the ceiling hung a make-believe chandelier constructed with barrel hoops and wire and thickly set with tallow candles. Under this, faro, monte, chuck-a-luck and roulette rivaled each other and the row of gambling tables never lacked a circle of intense, swarthy faces, as well as the paler Anglo-Saxon.

The odor of tobacco and the scent of liquor tainted the pure breeze. Juan watched the strange and fascinating scene until his weary eyelids refused him further vision and he slept.

Day dawned. The gambling soldier thrust his hands into empty pockets for coin to buy his breakfast, then shrugged his shoulders and drawing out his empty hands, rolled him a cigarette, and, with blood-

shot eyes but contented mind, reported for duty. Women with black *rebozos* slipped quietly to early mass; some of the faces were tear stained and haggard; others were wan from the night's dissipation. The peddlers and laborers began their daily avocations. The priest in his long, black robe and the American in his frock coat each hastened to their respective shrine. Alas! It was often a very poor specimen of our countrymen, who came to the frontier towns of Mexico and Texas, to prey on the vices or weaknesses of the young men seeking fortunes in these new fields. The weary sentinel gladly gave place to his fresh comrades and hastened joyfully off to his breakfast, and if fortune favored him, to make good the lost opportunity of night, by a cock-fight, or some other gambling device.

The prisoners woke but half refreshed and longing for a square American breakfast without any red pepper.

The Texan officers were already receiving visits from sympathizing Americans, and promises of money and little comforts made the morning seem brighter than any since the battle of Mier.

Alas! that General Ampudia should, with his apologies for the unpleasant episode of the preceding evening, be compelled to dispel the cheerfulness with the bad news of Santa Anna's command. A direct and flagrant violation of the terms of capitulation drawn up at Mier.

No blame should be attached to General Ampudia for this breach of faith. Rumor had reached Santa Anna of Ampudia's clemency toward the Texan prisoners; and jealous of his own prerogatives, "The Napoleon of the West," as he styled himself, asserted his supremacy by disregarding the agreement of his general to hold the prisoners on the border until exchanged or released.

On the 12th of January, 1843, Colonel Fisher, General Green, Adjutant Murry, Sailing Master Lyon, Dr. Shepard, and the gay and genial Dan Henrie, who served as their interpreter, all set forth on their journey to the Mexican capital under the care of General Canales (whom General Green heartily disliked as much as he admired Captain Castro). General Green, declared Sailing Master Lyon to be his body-servant and he was enabled to keep this old friend with him, thus saving him many of the hardships he would have had if he had remained with the main body of prisoners. Dan Henrie had served in the United States navy, had seen many parts of the world, was a grand forager, always happy, could speak a little of several languages, and was a delightful acquisition to the party of men in the very unpleasant situation they were facing.

Two days later, poor Juan saw his father go out of Matamoras with his unfortunate comrades, and it was with a heavy heart that he saw the double file

of prisoners, Billie, Harvey and Gilbert as well as his loved friend, Orlando Phelps.

As Asa Hill walked slowly with his fellow captives on the road to unknown dungeons, perhaps the one drop of sweet into the cup of bitterness was that Juan would be spared the horrors of prison life. General Ampudia had, with Mr. Hill's consent, placed Juan at the best school in Matamoras; and to insure him kindly and courteous treatment, he was registered as Juan C. C. Hill de Ampudia. Thus as the adopted son of an illustrious and powerful man, he reaped all the pleasures and benefits incidental to such a position. But Juan had that magnetism born of a heart full of kindness and a soul full of truth and these qualities assure friends independently of wealth or position.

He enjoyed much freedom in roaming over the town, and to the country boy it was full of interesting sights and happenings. Like all frontier towns, it possessed a mongrel population and the shabby frame house of the American jostled elbows with the squat building the Mexican delights in.

It was in the distinctively Mexican quarters that Juan found it most interesting, for here all was strange as in a foreign land. The houses were mostly unpretentious, flat-roofed buildings of brick stuccoed with white or yellow; one door and an iron-barred window in front on the street. These houses were built around a square so as to enclose a large

courtyard which was the common property of all. Through a large double doorway, the *arrieros* drove their loaded charges and having relieved them of their burdens, the *burros* would be turned into a smaller yard, where food and water was provided. In the center of the main yard numerous stalls displayed all the necessities, and many of the luxuries the common people used.

Sometimes Juan would rise early and stroll through one of these courtyards. Many of the people would be seated at little tables drinking coffee or chocolate and eating bread and fruit, for the Mexican eats a much simpler breakfast than the Anglo-American. Poor Juan, it made him homesick when he looked at the breakfast. How he longed to sit down at the home table and enjoy the venison steak, stewed rabbit or bacon and sausage, the hot biscuit, cornbread, battercakes with "good old molasses" or honey. But he had to acknowledge that people seemed to enjoy their simpler fare as much as the home folks did their heartier meal.

In the center of the court were peddlers of vegetables, fruits, eggs and poultry. Seated on the ground they waited quietly and seemingly indifferent to sales. Some had little stalls where gay colored handkerchiefs and gaudy cheap dress goods tempted the dark-eyed damsels and matrons. Blankets, sombreros, and baskets were heaped in profusion; cheap clay pottery and gay little toys all lay in ambush for the

small coins of the careful housewife, the gay young dandy, the pretty girl; the little ones were assailed in every direction by *dulces*, and Juan often fell a victim to these strange compounds of sweetness.

At any hour of the day, there was something new and diverting in the ugly little town. If only he could have had the boys or his father with him to enjoy it; for it was all an every day matter to his new friends; besides his slight knowledge of Spanish prevented a free interchange of thoughts. And so he often wandered alone, unconscious that he was an object of interest to others.

Often he watched the drill of the big-hatted soldiers, who never marched in step or seemed to notice the rhythm of the band's fine music. He enjoyed the little half-clad children lassoing cats, dogs, omnivorous goats, patient *burros*, good-natured passers-by or each other with untiring energy and unceasing enthusiasm.

Cock fights were everywhere save inside the churches, and indeed the almost inevitable adornment of the poorer classes, was a fine game cock tethered in one corner of the room with a little dish of corn and another of water, flapping his wings and crowing defiance to his feathered brethren in adjacent houses.

Juan grew familiar with these simple houses with beaten clay floors and no furnishing save a little chest or box that held the superfluous clothing of the en-

tire family; a little pile of mats represented their bedding; some earthen pots and jars for food and water, and the indispenable *metate*, or mill for grinding corn. These were the furnishings of the one room that served the family for sleeping room and living room. Fortunately, the balmy climate enabled them to live in the open air the greater portion of the year.

At night the open doorways often framed a striking picture: a group of muleteers squatted near a fire engaged in the fascination of gambling. The flickering light fell on their dark faces half hidden by the great hats gleaming with silver braids and tassels. It threw their witchlike shadows long and fantastic in dancing mockery, and from all sides of the courtyard other shadows were dancing wierdly to meet them, for each house was open wide and its inmates happily engaged in pleasure or domestic duties. Some were cooking, some were dancing, some were singing. Children played in and out the many groups with shrill voices and happy laughter. Now and then some sentimental *burro*, moved by sympathy with the gay throng, would lift his sonorous voice and contribute to the harmony, whereupon every skulking dog, and these seemed innumerable and of all degrees of mongrelism, would rise and bark and bark and bark until some indignant citizen would end the bedlam by kicks and ejaculations of “*Cst! Cst!*

Sal!" or "Callate, Callate la boca!" Get out, or Shut your mouth!)

Juan's experience at Matamoras was of short duration. Just as he was becoming accustomed to his new surroundings, and able to put a less divided mind on his studies in the unfamiliar Spanish, another change in his varied career was announced.

General Ampudia received a letter from Santa Anna requesting that the young Texan, (Juan Christobal Colon Gil) be forwarded by way of Tampico and Rio del Monte to the City of Mexico. This was a source of great distress to General Ampudia, for he was growing more attached to the boy each day. He desired to keep him in school at Matamoras although all the fine government schools were at the capital. But of this Juan knew nothing, and only consoled himself by thinking that perhaps after all he might hear something of the fate of the other Texans, and share the imprisonment of his dear father, brother, and beloved chums. He had written to his mother and Jeffrey, and General Ampudia assured him that the answers should be forwarded promptly on their arrival at Matamoras, a great comfort, for military dispatches were prompt, but mail facilities were the poorest.



AT THE ARCHBISHOP'S
PALACE

CHAPTER XIII.

AT THE ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE.*



THE order of General President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna knew no modification, it was imperative, and now the young captive who had these months been as an honored guest at the headquarters of General Ampudia, must

be sent to Mexico City. Much as he desired to keep the little boy with him, yet well did the General realize that in his superior officer and the President all in one, were combined the "Mildness of the lamb and the fierceness of the enraged tiger." *The boy must go!*

Juan by his amiability, adaptability and his ever obliging and happy nature, had won the love and respect of not only the General himself, but his staff officers and all who had come in contact with this remarkable youth.

* Almost this entire chapter, word for word, was received from Mr. J. C. C. Hill in person.

“Under safe escort,” read the order of President Santa Anna, but General Ampudia knew the dangers attendant upon sending a boy over that long, and al-



Entrance to Archbishop's Palace

most untraveled route, for bandits abounded in all directions, making extra precautions necessary.

Every arrangement was now completed, and an escort provided of a captain, a lieutenant, one or two orderlies, and a dozen or more soldiers, all thoroughly equipped for a safe journey. General Ampudia had presented to Juan a beautiful little horse, bridle and saddle, the latter gorgeously decorated after the

Mexican fashion, and now with his own hands assisted our young hero into the saddle. The officers about headquarters had assembled to bid goodbye to the little protege of the General, and as the calvacade moved away the clear voice of the General rang out: “*Adios mi hijito!*” (Goodbye my little son.) “*Adios mi nino!*” (Goodby my child) “*Dios te bendige!*” (May God preserve thee.)

Our young traveler turned in his saddle waving his hand, and with all the eloquence of his grateful heart, he returned to the General and other officers the pathetic, parting salutation: “*Adios.*”

It is a long distance from Matamoras to the Capital by way of Tampico over a then very rough, barren and uninhabited region. Only an occasional *haciendo*, (plantation) or *pueblito* (little village) was to be seen on that entire journey, save when they passed through Tampico and one or two places of the same size and importance. The kindly people along the route were always curious and interested to know something about *El Muchachito Americano, al prisonero.* (The American boy prisoner) which one of the escorts explained to them. “*Pobrecito! Probrecito!*” (Poor little fellow) fell upon Juan’s ears many times on that long journey.

At last the domes and turrets of the churches in the Great Capital of Mexico gleamed in the morning sunlight, and though perhaps a little weary, but not

discouraged, our young captive felt prepared to meet anything that might come to him.

The captain in charge had been given positive instructions by General Ampudia that Juan was to be delivered only to His Excellency General Presidente Santa Anna. On halting before the National Palace to carry out his orders, the Captain was informed



Archbishop Posada

that His Excellency was ill and unable to see the boy then, but he had arranged for him to go at once to the Archbishop's Palace, which was just across the street, where he would receive proper care until he should himself be able to receive him.

The Captain and Juan were soon ushered into the great *zaguán* (hall of the palace) and were met by

a young friar, and by him were conducted into the presence of the great head of the church of Mexico. At every step Juan took he was saying to himself: "I wonder what an Archbishop looks like. Will he be cross and crusty and say hard things to me?" His heart was in his mouth as he followed the Captain and the friar and now stood facing a new problem. But instead of a grim, disagreeable, old man, "who would look cross," Juan beheld a genial, kindly, elegant looking old gentleman who at once extended his own white, velvety hand and took the tanned, little brown hand of Juan which hung by his side, and in kindly words said: "My young friend, the President told me that you were coming, and that you should remain here with me until he is well enough to see you. I bid you welcome to the *Arzobispado* (Archbishop's palace) where you must feel at home, and where we shall do all we can to make you comfortable. The President is quite sick now."

The Captain took an affectionate leave of Juan and for his kindness and attention to him on the long journey, Juan thanked him sincerely.

By this time Juan was both speaking and understanding the Spanish very well and was greatly enjoying this knowledge.

The Archbishop asked him if he were tired. "No, Your Reverence," said Juan, "I am not a bit tired, been riding a horse in Texas ever since I could stand alone."

The Archbishop now asked the boy about himself, and at once the whole story about Mier followed. The good man became deeply interested and observing that the boy was suffering mental anxiety about his father and brother, kindly laid his hand upon the boy's head saying: "My son, these things are all in the hands of God: we must pray to the Holly Mother to intercede and bring your dear ones to you in safety."

These comforting words fell like a gentle balm upon the spirit of the heartsick boy. The Archbishop observing the effect of his words wisely requested the young frair to take Juan into the garden. In Mexico these gardens are all inside the houses, and are called *patios* or courtyards, and in houses so extensive as the *Arzobispado* there might be two or three of these courtyards.

Juan was dazzled by the beautiful trees, shrubs, flowers and plants, which he beheld on every side. There were fine, old olive trees which the friar assured him were brought from Europe; grand banana plants, and many lemon and orange trees, and clinging to every possible support were rare, large, double, red and pink roses, and white and yellow jasmine filled the air with their fragrance; camelias, violets, japonicas, carnations, hibiscus, and a bewildering array of gorgeous vines and flowers which he had never before seen, greeted his delighted eyes at every turn. It was growing late, Juan was given a light

repast and he and the young friar now went into a large room and each taking one of the snowy, single beds, the boy was soon lost in a blessed and refreshing sleep.

Early the next morning a white-clad *mozo* served Juan his coffee and roll, saying the Archbishop would like to see him down stairs. Responding, he soon found himself in one of the large reception rooms of the Palace. The Archbishop was at that moment engaged with some visitors, but an attendant told him to be seated near the front window, where he could view the scenes of the street. There seemed to be a multitude of widely-excited people and Juan craned his neck as far as he could before the iron grating to see what it all meant.

A man approached ringing a bell, the throng began to drop down on their knees and call out:..*Dios viene!..Dios viene!*" (God is coming.) There came a coach drawn by two fat, sleek mules and in the coach was a priest, and walking behind the coach were a dozen friars with lighted candles chanting as they moved in double file. On hearing the bell all the young priests and attendants in this room and about the Palace, dropped on their knees, murmuring something the like of which Juan had never heard before. But what the priest did, Juan did not see, for an exclamation of disgust from the interior of the room called his attention from the street, and he beheld the Archbishop Posada standing with bow-

ed head, while by his side knelt a young man who glared upon Juan with anything but a pious expression.

Filled with astonishment at the menacing look, Juan stood like a statue awaiting developments. From out the street the tinkling of the little bell and chanting of the friars rose with an oppressive solemnity that fell upon Juan's buoyant young spirit like a black shadow. The sound passed on, and, immediately in its wake he heard the reviving stir of the crowded street.

The Archbishop raised his kindly face and said pleasantly: "Good morning my son." Then turning, he spoke rapidly but quietly to the young man, now erect, and raising his hand, dismissed him.

"My son," said the Bishop, looking seriously at Juan, "Though you rejected the Holy Mother, do you not worship the Holy Son, Our Lord Jesus?"

"Yes, sir," faltered poor Juan in astonishment.

"Then why do you fail to make your devotions when He passes by, going to the dying faithful?" asked the Bishop a little sternly.

"I don't know anything about such things," said Juan. I am sorry to have appeared rude to you, and hope Your Reverence, you will overlook it this time, it was all from not knowing, that I seemed impolite and without respect for the religion of your people."

The Archbishop then explained that the passing of

the Sacred Host was the carrying of the Holy Sacrament to the bedside of some dying person. Juan's mistake had been in not kneeling when a Sacred Host was carried by.

The Archbishop now turned to Juan and in an earnest, kindly manner said: "My son, you must be baptized in the True Church, then you will understand and appreciate the beauty of these ceremonials; they are all symbolic of the life of our Blessed Savior. I will appoint a time very soon for you to be baptized."

"Baptize me!" said Juan, looking up in amazement at the Archbishop. "When an infant I was baptized in the arms of my mother into the Methodist church, and I am still a member of that church. It is the church of my parents and all my people, Your Reverence, and I don't see how I could leave it."

"Why, that is no church at all. Did not our Savior say of St. Peter, 'On this rock will I build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it'?" And the Archbishop, warming to his theme, enlarged on the duties and privileges of St. Peter as embodied in the Holy Catholic Church.

Now Juan was a good boy and a believer in the religion of his mother, but he was not able to cope with so learned a scholar upon a subject so entirely unfamiliar to him, so he waited quietly till the Bishop had finished his eloquent appeal. Thinking over his long separation from his mother, of his brother

wounded and in the hospital at Mier, of his father somewhere on a desolate road in need of him, the tears rose and he turned and gazed out of the window with unseeing eyes. A great wave of homesickness and heartsickness swept over him. His slender, boyish figure outlined against the pleasant morning sky, had a droop to the square shoulders that was infinitely pathetic and appealing.

The Archbishop must have felt this appeal for he said in a gentle, kindly voice: "The Holy Mother loves a good son and God is merciful." Then as the silence continued and the boy still gazed out of the window, he continued:

"Let us not quarrel *mi nino* (my child) it is all in the hands of God. But, Juan, if the Sacred Host is carried by, you should at least uncover your head—besides, *hijito mio*, if you do not, the ignorant people may fall upon and hurt you because they may think you show disrespect to their most sacred belief.

Juan found it very pleasant to have the freedom of the beautiful orchards, and to move in and out among the servants at their work, for of all of the strange things he saw, nothing struck him as being so odd as their kitchen furniture. To see a woman making *tortillas* was a familiar sight, and something that never lost the charm of novelty; he felt the same interest in the primitive range, a bench or ledge of brick or adobe that ran along the side of the wall; it was perhaps two or three feet high and two feet

broad, and the little fires of charcoal were built for each savoury dish. Juan wondered how "Mammy Lou" would like to cook on it. He laughed to himself when he thought of the great logs in the hearth at home, where the family cooking was done, for as yet cookstoves in any numbers had not reached Texas, and the sight of one would have filled him with more astonishment than the charcoal cooking of the Mexicans.

The water carriers with their heavy jars seemed to have the right-of-way; their peculiar manner of strapping their burthen around their forehead prevented them from looking up and avoiding obstacles in their path; so ladies with close drawn *rebozos*, priests in shovel hats and long robes, and gentlemen with lower parts of their faces wrapped in handkerchief or muffler, for the night chill had not as yet yielded to the sun, these and other pedestrians stepped courteously aside.

Little mouse-colored burros loaded with charcoal, were guided on their tortuous path by half-naked Indians yelling "*carbon! carbon!*" (charcoal). In another direction long lines of little *burros* crept slowly on their way loaded with wood, vegetables, corn, jars, baskets, anything and everything that was used in the domestic life of the Mexican. Now and then in this strange procession there would come another Indian with a long crate strapped to his head and hanging down his back who, as he trotted along, call-

ed at the highest pitch of his voice, "*huevos! huevos!*" (eggs). Juan could not resist smiling as he thought how that man would look if one of the scantlings tied to a little burro near him, should accidentally hit the crate with its frail contents. But no accidents happened to mar the slow going pace of the procession. The *burros* dragged their clumsy loads of timber in and out threading their way through the crowd, the *arrieros*, (mule drivers) beside them calling encouraging words and seeming never to be hurried, angry, or in any way troubled at the slow progress they made. In fact no one seemed in haste, and all were good natured.

Many of the men had panniers of vegetables, and others had tall coops full of poultry, cackling and crowing in the most animated fashion as if discussing their first impressions of the city.

Indians were plentiful swinging along at a little dog trot with a big basket or crate loaded with fruit or vegetables, or a wardrobe or bureau, everything in fact that the *burro* carries except timber or wood. The peddlers of *pulque* presented a very odd appearance, indeed, for they carried this popular beverage in the skin of a sheep, or pig, even the legs in entirety; it seemed rather repulsive to Juan and he mentally resolved not to drink any *pulque*.

Many of the Indians seemed to have brought their entire family, the procession headed by the men in their white cotton trousers and faded *zarapes* dang-

ling from their shoulders, their wide brimmed hats with conical crowns often decorated with a bit of silver or gold braid; next would come the women in their short skirts, their dark or black *rebozos* serving as bonnet and shawl, and the inevitable baby, half concealed by its folds, hanging behind, and often below the vegetables, or tucked in one arm while the other carried some small contribution to the family stock in trade; then a small mob of various-sized children naked and half-naked, each bearing their small burden to be disposed of at the general market at the grand plaza. Sometimes this burden was an armful of fruit or vegetables or a pair of doves, or maybe a fowl. Whatever it was, they bore it with cheerful pride and amiability, and a supreme consciousness or indifference to the fact that one man might easily have carried the collective burdens without injury or inconvenience.

It was interesting to watch the pantomime of a bargain, for although the swift flowing speech was beyond Juan's limited vocabulary of Spanish he had already recognized that they sold as much with their hands and shoulders as other nations do with their tongues. Such shrugging of shoulders! Such waving of arms! Such flexible fingers! Such intensity of expression through all, and when from appearances he thought the deal a failure, what a surprise to see the vendor call, the would-be purchaser turn, and the

beaming smiles of both at the happy conclusion of this momentous affair.

When friends met there was an interchange of embraces, and bows, and graceful gesticulations that were an astonishing revelation to the Texas lad.

As Juan gazed up the street, the narrowing vista was met by a mountain wall. As he gazed down the street the same barrier ended the perspective, and over the housetops in front, he could see the same grand range with the terraced roofs, the bell-towers, and the domes outlined against the porphyritic rock that completely encircles this beautiful, quaint, old city.

Over all and through all it seemed to Juan, there were always bells ringing. Sometimes one bell would begin quite softly, then a chorus of smaller ones would join—then a grand uproar of very large ones would take up the good work and drown the smaller bells in a very ocean of sound; then a brief silence would follow in which the lesser noises of humanity would assert themselves once more.

Beggars were everywhere! Standing on the street corners; sitting in the doorways, crouched under the wayside shrines; stationed at every church entrance infesting the public buildings; it seemed to Juan he met an outstretched hand or heard a whining voice, in whatever direction he turned.

Juan was a close observer and he soon discovered that the City of Mexico was laid out with geometrical

precision. The houses, mostly towering three stories high, were closely built together without intervening spaces or glimpses of yards from the street; the roofs were flat with parapets to guard the edges. It would have made a very monotonous skyline, for there were no chimneys to break the straight lines, but it was much diversified with numerous church towers and cupolas that graced each square.

Convents and cloisters were everywhere. The streets were full of priests and friars, and to Juan it appeared that the people did more praying than work; no doubt this was so, for it was the Lenten period. Even as he gazed, a little tinkling of bells rang through the noisy street; as by magic the people faced the center of the street and knelt. Women in black or blue *rebozos*, an Indian girl in cotton chemise and short skirt, a man's hat shading her long black braids, ragged *lazarones*, gayly dressed *arrieros*, soldiers in uniform, *mozos*, (men-servants of the household) in white cotton jackets and wide flowing trousers, Mexican *caballeros* (gentleman) in picturesque elegance, and portly gentlemen in sedate frock coats, were to be seen at any hour of the day.

Juan heard a bell ringing and said to himself: "Now that's another Sacred Host coming along, guess I won't miss it this time," so off came his hat, and onward came the crowd, leaving an open path for the passage of the Sacred Host, priests and friars. The entire populace in the street was on its knees.

The boy was feeling at home. Everyone about the Palace treated him very kindly and he realized each day that he was, indeed, fortunate, but this feeling was always checked by the thought of what his father and brother might be suffering, also the other Texans. Despite his own good fortune he bemoaned the fate of those near and dear to him.

One day, greatly to his surprise and delight, a letter came to him in the familiar handwriting of General Ampudia. Upon the envelope the address read: "A Juan C. C. Hill, de Ampudia," "Palacio Nacional Mejico;" and enclosed was a letter from his beloved mother, the first he had received. His heart swelled with pride as he tearfully read her loving missive and then the affectionate greetings from his good friend, General Ampudia, gave him great pleasure. The letter had come by special government courier, and was followed at intervals by others of the same kind, and they were always addressed to Juan C. C. Hill de Ampudia, and inside they read: "*A mi querido hijito*, (to my dear little son).

BEFORE THE GREAT
DICTATOR

CHAPTER XIV.

BEFORE THE GREAT DICTATOR.*



Gen. Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna

HIS Excellency, el Señor General Presidente Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, wishes to see muchacho Hill, the Texas boy."

This was the announcement of an aid upon the staff of General Santa Anna at the National Palace, and an orderly was

dispatched to escort our young captive guest from the Archbishop's Palace into the presence of his "serene Highness." The order was emphatic, there was no escaping the dictum of this most dreaded of men according to Juan's estimate of Santa Anna. Like an electric flash the boy was startled from head to foot; visions of terrible experiences through which he had passed; the siege of Mier, the capitulation, the breaking of his treasured gun, the order to come into the presence

* Contents of this chapter were given by John C. C. Hill in person.

of the august General Ampudia; what followed—and the terrible sufferings of the Texans crowded rapidly through his mental retina. But now, to face a new danger, and be subjected to the ordeal worse than death in meeting the awful Santa Anna, who would undoubtedly have him killed; all these thoughts passed through his mind. True, that all these months he had been recognized as a prisoner, but owing to the great kindness of General Ampudia, and later of the Archbishop of Mexico, it was in name only, for he had been as free as a bird from the moment of his coming into the presence of the General; in fact had General Ampudia been his own father, he could not have been more tender or gentle in his treatment of the boy.

But there was now no time to grieve over the possibilities of fate, nor to cross rivers before he reached them, so with his usual courage and adaptability, he laid aside the book he had been reading, and, giving a finishing touch to his faultless attire and passing his hand lightly over his glossy locks, he stepped forth, following in the direction of the young officer. Santa Anna was living in the National Palace which fronts the *Zocala* (an open park or square) just across the street from the Archbishop's Palace on the *Calle De Moneda* (street of money) both establishments being in close proximity to the Cathedral and Military Barracks.

Juan had time and again gone over every inch of ground in and about these notable establishments, save of course, the inner home of Santa Anna. This was one place in all the world that the boy hoped he should never see. He did not feel afraid to see any man that breathed, but what could this all mean now, that he must appear in person before this butcher of human beings—but the orderly moved forward rapidly and soon they were inside the door of the vast room in which this awful man sat upon a dais (throne-like rise of the room) with draperies of gorgeous gold and red, held in artistic lines on either side. Here was the man in whose hands rested the destiny of Juan and the fate of his father and brother! Notwithstanding the deadly silence which was over-awing in its intensity the boy hastily took in the magnificence and splendor of that entire room. Portraits of Mexico's great men were on all sides, and, in a conspicuous place, hung a life-size portrait of George Washington. Juan felt like bending his knee because this was a sure enough saint for all men to worship. The room itself was truly the abode suited to an emperor.

With the utmost composure, ease, grace and dignity, sat Santa Anna, his dark eyes though penetrating, looked up kindly at the boy, and the clothes he wore were simple and unostentatious. Later Juan saw him in the grandest clothes a man ever wore;



Vice-President Gomez Farias

his breast literally covered with the decorations and honors given by his appreciative countrymen.

Juan had reached the dais on which the grim Dictator was seated and he, noting the advance of the picturesque little figure with a face of rare beauty and brightness, extended his hand and invited the boy to come nearer, saying: "Well,

my young friend, I am glad to meet you for I have heard a great deal about you. Although you are still a very small boy, you have made for yourself a flattering reputation. General Pedro Ampudia has told me much of your character and conduct at Mier. Few boys in any country could have met and overcome the same difficulties that you have, and I am glad to know you in person."

Juan felt his face flush and his ears tingle and he began to tell the General that he deserved no credit for having done his duty under these great trials.

Santa Anna gave a little wave of his hand indicating that the boy must not deprecate his own fine deeds. There was a slight stir and he turned in the direction indicated by the penetrating glance of

Santa Anna who nodded to two other gentlemen, who now approached and from their dress and manner Juan was sure they were men of position. At this moment General Santa Anna introduced General Jose Marie Tornel, then minister of war,—formerly Minister to the United States, the most erudite and scholarly man of his times and a strikingly handsome and elegant looking man, who came forward with extended hand and beaming countenance, speaking to the boy in good English.

The other distinguished man to whom Juan was formally presented was General and vice-President Gomez Farias, an able diplomat and scholar, a man notable in the history of his country; and among his many fine deeds was that he was the first to recommend the taxation of church property.

Instead of deadly and unrelenting foes with animosity flashing from every feature, he beheld in their faces benevolence, wisdom and intelligence. They had been called by Santa Anna in special consultation to settle upon some plan looking to the future welfare of the boy. This meeting of these three wise and able men, taken in connection with the character and history of the boy, was perhaps one of the most notable and altogether remarkable ever recorded. The results were far-reaching and were bounded by the best qualities of mind and heart of which these three great men were possessed. Juan's destiny was in the hands of these notable men!

The story of his fearless courage had reached them, and his beauty, magnetism and charm had won them at a first glance—they were eager to do the best for him. The fact that Santa Anna had no living sons was the animus for the idea of his adopting him as a son, then to have him educated at Chapultepec to become an officer in the army. This Santa Anna now formally proposed to do, suggesting the military college as a suitable school; and, in his most courtly and sympathetic manner the proposition was made.

The suddenness as well as the magnitude of this great offer was almost overwhelming to the boy; he could hardly believe his own ears; he began to stammer out his thanks, saying his father would have to decide this matter for him. Santa Anna urged his claim with increasing courtesy and emphasis, to which Juan replied:

“Your Excellency, I thank you for this great kindness; to attend some of your fine schools here would greatly please me, but the other matter of being adopted by you as your son would seem impossible, when a boy like myself is blessed by the



General Jose Maria Tornel

most loving and devoted parents. These things must all be settled by my father should he live to get here; besides I cannot serve in your army, for if a war should break out between Texas and this country, I would go home and serve in the ranks. I should never fight my own country."

An amused smile played over the countenances of the three great men at this uncompromising answer. It was this straight-forward courage of Juan's that made him so many friends. Also the fact that he was really unconscious of anything unusual in his course. A thing was right or it was wrong, in his simple creed. He tried to do that which was right.

"Well, if you do not wish to become a student at Chapultepec, where would you like to go?" asked Santa Anna gently, after a pause.

"Your Excellency," said Juan, "with all this uncertainty as to the fate of my father and brother, it is impossible for me to tell you whether I want to go to school or not; at any rate not until I am sure my dear ones are safe and alive and that I shall see them again. I should love to go to a good school, but not now."

Continuing Juan said, "When my mother consented for me to go to the war with my father and brother, I made her a solemn promise to take care of them. This I did the best I could as long as I was near them, and I think I helped father a good deal before we left Mier, for when I told General Ampudia

that I had given mother this promise, he gave father a horse to ride all the way from Mier to Matamoras. But when you sent that cruel order for all the Texans to be marched to this capital, I could do nothing but pray to God for the protection of my poor old father. Jeff is still in the hospital at Mier, and all these months I have not heard a word from mother, and here I am alone in this country and still not a word can I get from any of my people. Every day and hour that I live my heart aches more and more over the thought that I shall never see them again. It seems sometimes like I can't live through any more anxiety and suspense. In my dreams I often see father and Jeff lying by the roadside, dying or suffering untold agony in a dismal prison, and when I wake up I still see them suffering. In this touching recital the bright, fearless eyes of the boy did not wander from the deep, dark eyes of Santa Anna. There was a little quiver in the voice, but not a sob escaped the firm lips.

There was a mist in the eyes of Santa Anna, and the heads of the other two great men were turned away. Either one or all of these men who had listened would have gladly gone in search of the father and brother, or done anything else in their power to comfort and console this heart-sick boy.

Santa Anna was the first to break the silence. Taking the boy's hand in one of his own, and tenderly placing the other on his head in measured words

of kindness, he said: "*Mi hijito* (my little son) try not to grieve so, without doubt your father and brother are safe and will soon reach this capital. I will do all in my power to find out something about them, and, in the meantime, I insist that you come at once to the palace and be as a son to my wife, the Doña Dolores de Tosta and myself. We shall do all in our power to cheer and comfort you. But you must come *immediately*."

"But, your Excellency, if they do come, will you send them home to mother?" The boy had forgotten himself—forgotten the relations between himself and the man most dreaded in all Mexico—he stood like one transfixed, gazing into the eyes of Santa Anna, but to him it seemed there was no hope for a favorable answer.

A deep silence fell upon the room. Santa Anna narrowed his eyes and looked steadily at the boy, who met the gaze unflinchingly. He was unconscious of any breach of discipline. General Tornel gave one fleeting, sidelong glance at Santa Anna, then gazed out of the window. General and vice-President Gomez Farias fixed his eyes steadily upon the boy.

Juan now ventured to speak, and with a feverish light in his eyes and a gentle tremor in his voice, he faltered: "Your Excellency, when my father comes he will be exhausted from the long march on foot, and you will, I know, be unwilling that a man so old and gray-haired as my father should remain a pris-

oner, when it won't do anybody any good and mother wants him to come home."

The boy was quick to take advantage of the strange and continued silence upon the part of Santa Anna, whose face still remained inscrutable. Juan was the first to speak, he said: "Your Excellency, my brother, Jeffrey, was severely wounded at Mier, and if he lives he may soon be able to come here to be shut up in prison, how awful!"

Boyish egotism, moral force, heroic courage, or mysterious foresight, call it what you will. The wonderful intuition of this extraordinary boy told him that in dealing with a many-sided character like Santa Anna, he must bring to bear all the strongest forces of his own nature. This he did, and still gazing fearlessly into the eyes of Santa Anna, Juan felt that everything that life held dear depended upon his own actions. So he ventured to say: "Your Excellency, when my father and brother come, you will give them their freedom, will you not?"

Santa Anna could no longer hold out against the earnest persuasions of the boy and with a generous and spontaneous warmth of manner he replied: "Yes, *mi hijito*, when they come and your father consents for you to remain and accept an education, and you are willing to do so, then I will liberate them both and send them home in safety to your mother."

Juan heartily shook the hand that held his own; he laughed amid his fast falling tears, for that young

heart so long over-burdened could no longer hold out when such an assurance had been given him by Santa Anna. Juan finally found words to murmur his gratitude and thanks to the Dictator, but he only waved his hand at the boy.

“It is a pleasure to serve so brave and good a little boy,” said Santa Anna. The other two great men came forward with warm congratulations over his success in obtaining the promise of freedom for his father and brother.

“But what about a choice of schools?” asked Santa Anna.

“It is impossible yet for me to express an opinion as to that, your excellency. Father and brother must first arrive, and then father can settle that matter for me, to the satisfaction of all. But, Your Excellency, I am pleased with what General Tornel says about the *Mineria*, and if all these other matters are settled I shall be glad to accept your kind offer of an education, and that of General Tornel to live in the *Mineria* and attend that school.”

General Tornel and vice-President Farias had listened earnestly to the conversation of the boy and Santa Anna. General Tornel, who was the Director of the *Mineria*, the finest college in all Mexico, which was founded by the Spaniards 300 years before for the sons of miners and mine owners, turned to Santa Anna, saying:

"Your Excellency, I feel sure our young friend would like the *Minoria* and if you will permit me I shall be glad to have him come into my family as a third son and he shall have two nationalities, and not have to fight either."

Would the earth open and receive this boy—why he could not believe his own ears. Two of the very greatest men in all that land and country planning to adopt a simple, inoffensive little boy who had only done his duty. It was no idle dream.

General and vice-President Gomez Farias then came forward saying, "In this great privilege of providing for the welfare of our young friend, am I to have no voice?"

"You are kind indeed to express a desire to help me and contribute to my welfare," said Juan. "I shall be glad to visit you at Chapultepec, whenever it seems convenient for His Excellency to permit me to do so."

And he did often visit General Farias at the military college. It was all settled between the three great men that later on the boy should enter the *Mineria*. With most peculiar sensations as well as gratitude for the friendly interest of these disinterested and newly found friends in an enemy's country with a strange language, without money or friends of his own kind to help out, how could he be the beneficiary of kindnesses so great and unexpected? He began the usual form of departure, when Santa Anna

called him to his side, and again taking his hand in his own he said: "Now remember, my son, that *immediately* you are to come to this palace and live with my wife and myself."

"How good of your Excellency, I do not deserve half so much kindness and my deepest gratitude goes out to you and to all who have been so very kind to me. If only my mind could be put at rest and this terrible doubt and uncertainty be removed, but as it is now I feel that no palace, however grand, could satisfy me unless my father and brother could come, and go home."

As the little figure was moving away from this remarkable trio, General Tornel called to him, "But remember to the *Mineria*, my son, you are to go to school—and with my sons be made happy—."

"Oh, yes, thank you, General, but first of all father and Jeff must come and go home." A wave of the hand, a gentle *adios*, and Juan went again to the the true purport of the visit.

Poor Juan came away from his first interview with this famous man, thoroughly bewildered. He expected a monster; he beheld an amiable gentleman, tall, well-proportioned, and graceful in every movement in spite of his wooden leg. So great was the charm of his manner, so tactful his conversation, Juan forgot his distrust and prejudice, and it was only after leaving the Dictator of Mexico, he realized the true purport of the visit.

He, the lonely little Texan, separated from his father, from his brother, his fellow-captives, had but lately felt the bitterness of parting from his new-found friend and protector, General Ampudia—he had now found, not only one great friend in the most powerful man in all Mexico, but he had found three notable men doing all in their power for him.

Juan became a great favorite in the palace of Santa Anna and both the General and his wife made every effort to make the boy feel at home—even the simple servants were unfailing in their attention and never grew tired of serving him. Everything in and about the home of these kind people was “at his order” and there he really felt “he had his home.” But a sad time came, the Doña Dolores fell seriously ill, friends and physicians gave no hopes of her recovery, and soon the Sacred Host was to be brought forward in her behalf. Certainly to the mind of a boy like Juan such splendor had never been equalled. Several thousand soldiers in line passed under a canopy which covered the street for several blocks. Bands of music at intervals pouring forth their low, soft, chanting music. His good friend the Archbishop in the most prominent place, with priests, friars, mendicants, boys with bells, splendid carriages of state, and every grade and phase of humanity was in that procession, all bent on saving the life of this good woman. All went well and the Doña De'ores was duly restored to her accustomed health.

Among the greatest pleasures of the boy were the frequent walks and drives Juan took with this amiable couple, going to cock fights with Santa Anna, and visiting many fine houses and other places of which he knew nothing. Juan was soon proficient in the Spanish language, but Mr. Gilliam in his "Travels in Mexico," speaks with regret that in showing him over the *Mineria* (1844) he had forgotten the English for many words had lapsed into Spanish. He was mistaken. Juan never forgot his English, nor his country, nor his religion.

General Tornel called frequently at the Palace and had many long conversations with him, when he found that the little Texan had not changed his convictions with his costumes. That he believed in the independence of Texas, and cherished the intention of fighting under her flag if war should be declared. He conceived a strong liking for the boy and respected the courage and loyalty of the little alien.

He had brought his sons, Augustin and Manuel, to see him, and a warm attachment had already formed between the boys, although somewhat retarded by their limited knowledge of each other's language; on Juan's arrival at the Archbishop's Palace, he found Manuel and Augustin Tornel waiting for him and they started out for a walk and had the great good fortune to meet General Waddy Thompson, Minister of the United States. This gentleman had done much to obtain the release of the Texans who were

captured in the ill-fated Santa Fe Expedition and this Juan knew. General Thompson at once recognized the boy for he, too, had heard the story of the rifle and he was much interested.

Saying to Juan: "As for yourself, my boy," "I think you have nothing to worry about. It is evident the President has taken a great liking to you and in that case, you will get everything you ask. He does nothing by halves. Keep up your courage, and, when your father comes, ask Santa Anna straight out to give him his freedom; as for you, why you as good as have it now."

"Thanks for your kind suggestions," answered Juan, "but His Excellency has already given me his word that he will send my father and brother home when they come."

"Then do not fear, he will keep his word," said General Thompson.

GENERAL GREEN'S
ACCOUNT

CHAPTER XV.

GENERAL GREEN'S ACCOUNT.



General T. J. Green

THE news had reached Santa Anna of Ampudia's clemency toward the Texan prisoners; and jealous of his own prerogatives, "The Napoleon of the West," as he styled himself, asserted his supremacy by disregarding the agreement of his general, to hold the prisoners on the border until exchanged or released. For this, perhaps, no blame should be attached to General Ampudia.

On the 12th of January, 1843, Colonel Fisher, General Green, Adjutant Murry, Sailing-Master Lyon, Dr. Shephard, and the gay and genial Dan Drake Henrie, who served as their interpreter, all set forth on their journey to the Mexican capital, under the care of General Canales (whom General Green heartily disliked as much as he admired Captain Castro). By a little fiction regarding Lyon as General Green's body servant, he was enabled to keep this old friend

with him, thus saving him many of the hardships he would have suffered had he remained with the main body of prisoners. Dan Drake Henrie had served in the United States navy, had seen many parts of the world, was a grand forager, always happy, could speak a little of several languages, and was a delightful acquisition to the party of men in the very unpleasant situation they were facing.

The Texans took up the line of march under the charge of Colonel Canales with six hundred infantry and cavalry guards and one piece of artillery. They went by way of Scarte upon the San Juan River, by way of Monterey, which is two hundred and seventy-five English miles. The officers going in advance of the men, reaching Monterey on the 22nd of January, and were given quarters at the hospitable mansion of Colonel Bermudez at the *mayor de la plaza*.

The men made slower progress, and at their first stopping place determined to charge upon the guards, but a misunderstanding of Captain Cameron's order prevented carrying it out.

"On the 29th the men reached Monterey, thence by way of Saltillo under charge of about two hundred and fifty guards in command of Colonel Barragan. February 2nd, camped at St. Catherine, twelve miles away and at Rinconada twenty-four miles. Here again they planned an attack upon the guards;

the place was not favorable for it but the vigilance of the guards became so extreme that the plan failed.

"We," continued General Green, "(the officers) arrived at Mateguala (Mat-a-wa-la) at nine o'clock at night and found the whole population out to see us. We were hurried through the streets and quartered at a *meson* (country tavern or wagon yard). Next morning old Colonel D. Matias de 'Aguirre came to see us. This old veteran treated us with great



The Bishop's Palace—Monterrey

kindness and ordered us to be removed to better quarters and placed under special charge of a humane gentleman and accomplished scholar, a lawyer by profession, D. Manuel Fernandez Palos. During our stay of three days in this city we were furnished

from the table of this gentleman with every luxury the city could afford. We were visited by all persons of distinction, among the rest a priest, a gentleman of superior intelligence and liberal feelings, who afterwards sent us several rich viands from his table. We also met the Baron De Kaminsky, a member of the traveling scientific corps of the Emperor of Russia. A gentleman of extensive acquirements who had been for several years exploring the Northern States of Mexico. This excellent old gentleman expressed for us the kind feelings of a father and upon parting, insisted upon our taking some of his excellent tea, which we highly enjoyed during our stay in Mexico. On leaving these kind friends, Colonel Fisher and myself addressed polite letters of thanks to these amiable and kind gentlemen.

Continuing, General Green says: "On February 6th we had reached the hacienda de Salado, 150 miles north of the city of San Luis Potosi, under Captain Ugatechia and on the 7th Colonel Barragan followed with the main body of the men. Here the Texans planned to escape. All conferred as to the practicability of charging the guards. Colonel Fisher opposed it, General Green favored it. Sunrise was suggested, as a time when the horses would be herded and I thought there would be no danger, that a few days of rapid march over the main road would insure

success. Our usual time of starting was half an hour after sunrise and as soon as the main body of our men had succeeded in driving their guards, Captain Fitzgerald was to lead the party around the buildings, force the gate and assist us if necessary, against our guards. Captain Romano, contrary to our former custom, had started us about eight or ten minutes previous to sunrise. In this time we had proceeded about three-fourths of a mile when the sun made its appearance over the mountains. I was riding by the side of Sailing-Master Lyon and remarked: "If our boys were going to do anything, now was the time. I had barely made the remark, when I heard the first gun. I knew what it meant, and exclaimed: 'We have them.' The second, third and fourth guns were fired before Captain Romano noticed it. He halted us and sent Lieutenant Arredondo back to see what was the matter. He galloped back a few hundred yards, returned in great haste, reported that the Texans had charged Colonel Barragan, and his troops were flying in every direction. Captain Romano ordered us on from the scene of action at full gallop with his cavalry lances at a charge on each side of us. After going two or three hundred yards, we were halted and made to dismount. The firing had now become very brisk, and the excitement in our party intense. Each had his speculations as to the result. I believed from the first, our men would prevail with a loss not exceeding ten. Colonel Fisher believed the

attack was injudicious and the whole of our men would be killed. Most of ours believed with me. At length a short pause was discerned in the firing, then it commenced again brisker than ever, and in a few minutes another pause which was quickly succeeded by a loud shout which we knew to be Texan. This shout for a moment quieted our excitement, but it was quickly succeeded by one of more interest to us. At this time a Lieutenant came up to us at full speed with orders from Colonel Barragan to Captain Romano to shoot us and come immediately to his assistance. He ordered his men to reprime their *escopetas* and make ready, which was instantly done. This was a critical moment and it was necessary to be met with coolness and promptness on our part. Colonel Fisher and myself asked him, "If he was not bound to obey the orders of Governor Ortega to take us to Mexico, or any subsequent order of Colonel Barragan, and that we expected we were in the hands of a gentleman and a soldier, not a murderer." His eyes were instantly lowered to the pommel of his saddle, and his countenance underwent hesitation, change and satisfaction, in as many seconds, when he raised himself in his stirrups and proudly clapping his hand upon his bosom ordered the interpreter to say to the gentleman, "That they are in the hands of a gentleman and a soldier, and that I will carry out the orders of Governor Ortega." Thus saying, our horses' heads were

wheeled towards Mexico and we were forced on at full speed by lancers on either side of us."

THE CHARGE OVER THE GUARDS.

"Among the privates foremost in the charge, as well as in bringing about the results—and to their lasting honor, we record their names—were Dr. R. F. Brenham, S. H. Walker, J. J. Cooke, Colonel William F. Wilson, Patrick Lyons, and others. The officers were generally in favor of the attempt; and at the appointed time, the lamented Cameron, with a quick coolness peculiar to him in trying emergencies, raised his hat, and giving a gentle flourish in the air, said in a distinct tone, a little mixed with his Highland brogue, "*Well, boys, we will go it!*" Thus saying, and suiting the action to the word, he grappled one of the sentinels at the inner door of their prison-yard, while Samuel H. Walker seized the other. It was the work of an instant to upset and disarm these, and get possession of the outer court where the arms and cartridges boxes were guarded by one hundred and fifty infantry. These men were quickly driven out or made to surrender; and while our men were arming themselves and securing ammunition, the cavalry had formed in front of the outer gate, which was also guarded by the company of "Red Caps." In charging through this gate to drive this company and the cavalry, poor Doctor Brenham and Patrick Lyon fell, and several others were wounded. That portion of the cavalry which was mounted, quickly fell back be-

yond the reach of our fire, while the "Red Caps" retreated round the main wall of the buildings to the south, through the gate into the courtyard which our party had just before left. A portion of our men pressed around to force this gate, believing still that we were in our quarters. Here Captain Fitzgerald received his death wound and John Stansbury, quite a boy, had his left eye shot out. The company of "Red Caps" soon capitulated and gave up their arms; the only condition which our men required of Colonel Barragan in releasing them was that our wounded should be treated kindly.

"We had three killed, Dr. Brenham, Lyon and Rice; Captain Fitzgerald and John Higgerson were mortally wounded and died soon after; Captain J. R. Baker, Private Stansbury, Hancock, Trehern, and Harvey, wounded. The enemy's loss was nine or ten killed and many more badly wounded. From the difficulty of getting arms in the commencement of the action it was not possible that more than one-half of our two hundred and fourteen men, with the exception of those who fought with brickbats, could have been engaged.

"When the main body of our men were marched from Matamoras, a negro fellow by the name of Swaney, who some years before had absconded from Texas and taken up his abode in that city, seeing that it was a good chance for him to speculate off his old acquaintances, followed them on to the place, and

on the route swindled all who dealt with him for *chile*, *tortillas*, *frijoles*, etc. No sooner, however, did the Texans charge their guard, than he exclaimed, "This is no place for Swaney," and, very wisely, did not wait to suit the action to the word, for his double-quick time had already preceded his prudent conclusion; and well it did, as he would have paid dearly for his speculation and insolence had he been taken.

Green's Mier Expedition—pp. 155 157.



THE DRAWING OF
THE BEAN

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DRAWING OF THE BEAN.



ON THE 25th day of March, 1843, at the Hacienda de Salado, in the State of San Luis Potosi, and one hundred and fifty-three miles from the city of that name, in a great barren plain, filled with Spanish daggers and desolation beyond words to express, a strange scene was enacted.

One hundred and seventy gaunt, haggard scarecrows of humanity were drawn up in lines within the same enclosure, that on the eleventh of February had witnessed their wild break for liberty. A month's wanderings in the wilderness, with a blazing sun by day, and a winter's chill by night, with starvation and thirst almost driving them mad, is not conducive to beauty, strength or suppleness. They had lost their way and wandered in the thorny desert until thirst had forced them to kill their animals and drink the blood and eat the raw flesh. It is useless to at-

tempt to depict their sufferings. Words can never equal the reality. Irons were on their wasted limbs and their tattered clothing showed the extent to which they had suffered.

The first order from Santa Anna was that all the Texans should be shot, but Colonel Mexia, who was in command, declined to carry out the order. He was the same Mexia who espoused the cause of Maximilian and was executed by his side. They had not long to wait before a second order was received.

Colonel Huerta was talking to another officer. Those who understood Spanish leaned eagerly forward, those who did not, looked at the speaker and then at their more accomplished comrades with keen anxiety on their pallid, unshaven faces.

All soon knew. Every tenth man was to be shot!

There were one hundred and seventy of them. That meant seventeen. Only seventeen out of one hundred and seventy! But who were the seventeen to be offered up as a sacrifice for their comrades?

The problem was easy. A common clay jar covered with a cloth was held by a soldier. This jar contained one hundred and sixty white beans, on top of these were laid seventeen *black beans*. *Seventeen black beans!* *Seventeen brave men* to be offered for all!

The prisoners names were called alphabetically and the poor fellows at the end of the list felt the cold shudders of nervous suspense, thrill over them, for few black beans had been drawn.

The officers led the pitiful procession. Captain Ewen Cameron was first. He drew a white bean. "Dip deep, boys!" he whispered, for he had discovered that the black beans were on top. The warning was whispered all down the ragged line. Captain Eastland, the commander of the LaGrange men drew the first black bean.

"Death has no terror for me!" he said. "But I hope some of you will live to see ample reparation for this, and that you'll never lay down your arms till the liberty of Texas is assured."

Many of the men maintained a rude hilarity, no doubt to conceal their true emotions, for it was a very different kind of courage that was needed to meet this ordeal, than that which faces an open field and no favor.

One by one they dipped their sunburned hands into the jar of death. Now the smooth boyish hand of a stripling; now a gnarled, rough hand used to a plow. Then a well-shaped hand used to penning deeds and contracts. This steady hand without a tremor, has wielded a surgeon's scalpel. This one, with sinews like little cords of steel, has held the lariat on many a plunging steer or wilder bronco. The hand of the young—the middle-aged—the old, all making blind choice of Life or Death!

Near the end of the line is our friend, Big Foot Wallace. His black head towers above his companions and his face can be seen above all. It looks serene

and untroubled as though the jar held a piece of gold for each man. His hand was the largest of all the hands that had been thrust in the small neck of the jar. As he drew it out with some little difficulty, the Mexican caught it in his own small, brown hand and holding it up to view, made some jocular remark regarding its size to the surrounding soldiers. The piercing, black eyes of Wallace looked at his steadfastly, then, without change of countenance, he dropped the white bean he had drawn. His hand released, he clanked back with Sesinbaugh, his partner in chains, and watched the next poor fellow try his fate.

At last the dread ordeal was over, and the seventeen freed from their shackles, dry-eyed and calm, were watched by their ragged comrades, dragging their heavy irons along out of the courtyard into the dusty road. The seventeen had done with marching.

General Green and Colonel Fisher were some distance in advance of the men who had made the break for liberty, and so did not know until long afterward the fate of their comrades, nor did they participate in the bean drawing. On arriving in Mexico City, these officers were given temporary quarters in the Archbishop's Palace in Tacubaya, a few miles from the Mexican Capital.

Of all the Texans, General Green had the least right to expect clemency from Santa Anna, for he was associated with one of the most unpleasant experiences of Santa's imprisonment in Texas; and his

captivity was fraught with much unpleasantness, for the Texans were full of hatred, yet bore his rule because no man strong enough to deliver, had risen as yet to their rescue.

The Texans never dreamed that the President of Texas had repudiated all responsibility of their expedition. The expedition he had sent to the border under the leadership of General Sommerville had disbanded. General Houston now asked of the Mexican Government that the Texans should be dealt with leniently. All this was strictly true, but it is hardly possible that General Houston fully realized the unhappy position in which it placed the men. But as Texas was in no position to undertake a war with Mexico, it was hard on everybody concerned.

The further fact that the men of the Santa Fe Expedition had been free only a short time previous, made their case more desperate, but all this they did not realize until long after.



The Plaza in Mier

Immediately after the arrival of General Green and Colonel Fisher: General Waddy Thompson, United States minister to Mexico, Mr. Packenham, the British Minister, called upon them to offer anything in their power, in their behalf. Then, as now, no country in the world looks more carefully after its subjects.

General Green made haste to warn Mr. Packenham in behalf of Captain Cameron, who was a Scotchman, and, as the leader of the attempt to escape, would be apt to suffer the death penalty. The good news that the order for the wholesale shooting of the Texans had been revoked, made all feel easier, but they still were afraid for Captain Cameron. So strong was this young Scotchman's personality, that all the men of the expedition had learned to love him as well as to admire his reckless bravery.

General Green and his brother officers did not long remain at the Mexican Capital, and from the journal of this fine old patriot and soldier, we read that "on March 25th, we had five leagues this day to march before reaching the Castle Perote. Upon our arrival at the village of Perote, in looking north about one mile, we could see the massive walls of the castle, with its numerous port-holes and dark mouthed artillery. The great extent of ground covered by the castle wall and the earthen embankment around the outer "chevaux de frise" gave this fortification a low appearance, and, at first sight we were struck with the mag-

nitude of its strength. Upon nearer approach in making our way through its winding entrance, and across the drawbridge over the great moat, thence through an archway into the great plaza fronting the governor's quarters, amid the roll of drums, the din of arms, and the clank of the chains, opened our eyes to the realities of imprisonment, and showed us what abler pens than mine have described as the most approved fortification of the eighteenth century. Here we met in rags and chains fifty of our countrymen, who had been kidnapped from their homes in San Antonio, Texas, the September previous, by General Woll."

The other Texans who had drawn beans, in heavy chains, now moved on toward the Mexican Capital. Billie, Harvey, Orlando and Gilbert having drawn white beans, were as cheerful as though they had not known this terrible ordeal, and the men also met the situation bravely. But on the march Captain Ewen Cameron's every movement was watched with keenest interest.

EWEN CAMERON THE LION HEARTED.

Ewen Cameron was called the "Lion-hearted" from the day the Texans laid down their guns at Mier the intrepid and lion-hearted Captain Ewen Cameron had been the leading spirit in the plans for escape. When these facts were made known to Santa Anna, notwithstanding the fact that Captain Cameron had drawn a white bean, the order came when the Texans

reached Tula, that for his leadership he should yield up his life. Upon being apprised of the fact while under close guard, the brave, young Scotchman's last act was to write a letter to the British Minister at Mexico remonstrating against the cold-blooded murder of a national enemy and a British subject. A priest, as usual at all the Mexican executions, was in attendance. He asked the young soldier if he would like to confess to him. "No," said Cameron, "throughout life I believe I have lived an upright man and if I have to confess, it shall be to my Maker." His arms were tied, elbows drawn back and when the guard advanced to bandage his eyes, he said to the interpreter: "Tell them no! Ewen Cameron can now, as he has often done before, for the liberty of Texas, look death in the face without winking." So saying, he threw his hat and blanket on the ground, opened the bosom of his hunting shirt, presented his naked breast and gave the word: "Fire!"

Captain Cameron was thirty-six years of age, tall, well-proportioned, and remarkably handsome, weighing about two hundred pounds, of extraordinary physical powers, which were in keeping with his manly countenance and lion-heart.

To this noble, adopted son of Texas, a debt of gratitude and a monument for his brave utterances in behalf of Texas liberty, is due. No native of the soil could have been more heroic.

Tulu is one of the most interesting places in Mexico, and is situated forty leagues from the capital. Here in this ancient town, with its vast amount of prehistoric interest, the brave young Scotchman was laid to rest.

The Texans moved slowly forward, and finally weary and foot sore they reached the Mexican Capital, and were at once conducted to the barracks under heavy guard and heavily manacled.

These gentlemen were deeply interested in the adventures of the Texans, and Mr. Packenham was deeply moved over the taking off of the gallant Ewen Cameron.

At General Thompson's request, Big Foot began the thrilling narration of the uprising over the guards of the Texans, and of their terrible sufferings. In his own quaint way, Big Foot began saying: "When we found we had outdone the guards at El Salado, and were actually free, I managed to get a big mule to ride. At first it was our plan to all stay together and travel night and day till we'd got to the border, but even under these trying circumstances of making our escape, some were for this plan while others opposed it. So we all left the highway and boldly set forth into that awful wilderness, thinking to make a short cut to the Rio Grande. Soon this proved to be a mistake and in the midst of this trackless waste filled with only Spanish dagger and everything else that had stickers and thorns, our men broke up into little

parties, each hoping to find the way out of that terrible desert.

"We suffered horribly after a while for we could find no water and the cactus leaves that we chewed for their moisture made our tongues and lips swell; then we had to kill our horses for food, and some of us drank the blood, trying to slake our terrible thirst. Some of the men died; a very few could not be accounted for, and we hoped they were successful in getting to the border. The majority were re-captured by the Mexican military who were on the alert in every direction, well knowing the awful fate the poor fellows had run upon in their wild break for liberty. They brought food and water in plenty with them, anticipating the terrible condition in which they would find us."

Continuing, Big Foot said: "I had been without water for five days, when my companions were retaken. I had killed my mule and dried its meat and had it in my wallet. A Mexican soldier had a gallon gourd half full of water and he gave it to me to drink. One of the officers noticing this, warned me not to drink too much at a time or it would kill me. The soldier tried to take the gourd away, but as he was short and I was tall, he could not reach it; several of his comrades tried to assist him, but I easily held it out of their reach, tilting my head back and holding the gourd up till I drained the last delicious drop. The fellow said I fell to the ground and went to sleep.



Big Foot Wallace Lost in the Desert

But the little Mexican thought I was dying. I slept a long time and woke up as 'good as new,' and proceeded to lunch on my dried mule."

Big Foot insisted that Billie should tell something about what happened at El Salado, so at once he began by stating: "It was on the eleventh of February and every day took us farther from the border."

"Brother Charley (Captain Charles Reese), was awful worried; he didn't care a bit whether he got out alive or dead, if the rest wanted to try, but he did believe we had one chance in a thousand to get home. There was not a man that knew the country, and you never saw a more God-forsaken region in all your life.

"It is absolutely waterless and as barren as a desert. You loll with the heat in the daytime, and freeze to death at night. But Charley would have risked it all, *if I would have promised to stay behind!* But you bet this child promised nothing! If he went, I went, and his company staid by him, none of us tried to get away.

"The morning of the eleventh we felt pretty nervous. Captain Cameron was to give the signal and I thought Charley would change his mind when the time came but he didn't. We had picked up two of the San Antonio men, Archie Fitzgerald and a man by the name of Higgerson, both were killed and so was Lorenzo Rice.

"We felt pretty blue after it was all over, and the

rest were gone. It made Charley sick to think that they might think him a coward, but Dan Henrie heard Ampudia tell Colonel Fisher to warn his men against trying to make their escape; that their lives would be forfeited if the men got away. Colonel Fisher told Captain Cameron to use his own judgment in this matter, but General Green told them to take the first chance they got and break for home."

"I never even thought when I was fighting, whether I would be killed or not. I didn't care!" "But that bean business was as bad as ghosts," said Harvey who was near at hand.

"That it was," said Wallace. "Worse than Injuns. I was nearly at the last and I knew that there were about as many black beans as white ones, and the black ones were a leetle the biggest, but they felt just the same. So, I let go, and took two more and fingered them and then I pulled out my hand and I had a white bean."

"There was an Irishman who stuck his hand in the jar, and when there were so few beans he jerked his hand out empty. He shook his fist at the officer and he says:

"Now that's the way ye would desave an innocent man to his destruction. Faith an' I'll not draw one of them. There is only a few banes in the pot!"

They told him he had to draw. Says he, 'An it's after murthering me yez are! Ye bloody spalpeens! Ye indacent bastes! Ye not giving a man a joodge

nor jury naythar; that's as plain as the noses on yes baboon faces! Let the ither men pick and choose as plazed them bist from a pot full of banes, an' now there's not a doozen left!"'

He stuck his hand in, grumbling all the time, and I declare I could not help but grin to hear him calling them the awfullest names and they not understanding. But we all watched him, Mexicans as well as us, and he pulled out a white bean! He just took that bean and shook it under the noses of the officers, and he says:

" 'An' now there, ye dirty naygurs! It started black, but I offered up a prayer to me saint, and St. Patrick he changed it from a black to a white wan! Hooray for me, St. Patrick and ould Ireland for-
ever!"'

"The boys that got the black beans were awful brave about it," said Big Foot after a while. "I reckon they are better off than we are but a man hates to die that way. If ever I get out again, I will even up that score! Ewen Cameron took his chance at the beans like the rest of us and he was free. That hound Santa Anna had no business to go back on it!"'

"Guess there isn't any difference in the experiences of any of the Texans, except those unfortunate men who drew black beans. It's about the most horrible risk I ever took, for I was sure that I'd pull out a black one."

Turning to Mr. Thompson, Big Foot asked if he had noticed the escopetas the Mexican soldiers use. Mr. Thompson answering in the negative, Big Foot continued:

“You needn’t ever want to shoot one of them.”

“What are they like, Mr. Wallace?” asked Thompson.

“Like?” said Big Foot, “why the blamed things they’re a kind of a bell-mounted-bull-doggish looking musket, carrying a very heavy ball, which is death by law when it hits, but that is seldom. I never fired one but once, and that was at the battle of El Salado, near San Antonio. During the fight, I saw a dead Mexican with one in his hands. My rifle was empty, so I took his and put the breach to my shoulder; my first impression was that I had been struck with a nine pound cannon ball. It kicked me heels over head, and I suppose kept on kicking me after I was down, for when I “came to” I found that my nose was unjointed, and two of my ribs stove in. I noticed that the Mexicans never put them to their heads.”

The Texans were quartered in the eastern part of the city of Mexico. Soon Billie Reese fell ill at the barracks, and was removed to the hospital de Jesus Nazareno, one of the finest of the many that were established by Cortez, where he remained ill for many weeks. He was unmindful of the crucifix at the head of his bed, nor did he hear the soft, low voices of the sisters of charity who gave him

the tenderest attention, nor did he see the face of the Holy Mother that looked down from the wall near by. His mind seemed to dwell upon his boy comrade, poor little Chris Yocum, who had met a tragic death by accident near Mier.

“They are going to leave him out there alone with the wolves and the snakes and owls! Put lots of rocks on him! *Cayotes are so bad!* Poor, poor Chris Yocum! Poor, poor boy!” he exclaimed over and over again. His voice trailed off into a sob and Harvey and Gilbert gulped sympathetically as it all came back to them.

“O! I’m so thirsty! Won’t he let us stop to get some water? Look how cool it looks! Drip—drip—drip from the bucket. Charley beg him to stop for water! Water! Water! I want water! He is a devil! The devil won’t let people have water! Water! Water!” His voice rose to a frenzied shriek.

“Here!” said Harvey, snatching the water bottle off the table and holding it to Billie’s parched lips. “Drink, Billie! Here’s water! Drink!”

“Stop boys, you’ll kill him,” said one of the older men. “They never let them drink water when they have fever.” Everyone near was frightened, for it was the belief of the time that water was injurious to a fever patient.

“It’s too late now,” said Harvey, half scared and half triumphant. “He has got a good swig now, you bet! Look, he is going to sleep.” The two boys sat

in thankful silence, grateful that the ravings that told such dreadful tales of suffering, were hushed for a little while.



SANTA ANNA AND
ORLANDO

CHAPTER XVII.

SANTA ANNA AND ORLANDO.

S*E SIENTA un poco triste, El Muchachito, esta manana?* (Is the little boy feeling sad this morning?) The soldier was making his beat, before the great door of the National Palaee and Juan was leaning against the portal, gazing wistfully upon the busy scenes of the streets concentrating in front of the Palace.

Juan turned and looked earnestly into the weaz-en, wrinkled face of the old Indian soldier, who was gazing upon the boy with a look of deep con-eern.

“Yes,” replied Juan, “I am sad today, am sad every day, how can it be otherwise, when I am a stranger and the fate of my father and brother, as well as all the Texans is still a mystery to me. Here I have been two months, and although everybody has been so very good to me, far better than I deserve, still a fellow naturally longs for his own. It’s so strange the Texans don’t come on, if any of them are alive.”

“*No se apure mas muchachito,*” (Little boy, don’t worry any more now.) “Today I heard in the Palace that some of these prisoners would arrive, perhaps your father and brother, or your friends may be among them; I hope so, and that God may take care

of them so that a good and a pretty little boy may see them safe and well," continued the soldier.

The words had scarcely passed the man's lips when a detachment of four, ragged, dirty, unkempt, almost barefooted young boys, in following their guard almost touched Juan's shoulder. They had passed several steps when Juan's keen eyes detected their identity. Oblivious of every passing object, he breathlessly ran, calling in excited tones: "Here I am, John Hill,—Stop, Boys! Hello there! Hello! Orlando! Billie! Harvey! Gilbert! All alive and here at least, *dear old boys from Texas!*"

The guards halted, and noting the elegant Mexican attire of the handsome youth who ran after the prisoners, were interested to see what it all meant. In an instant the loving boys, after their long separation, their perilous experiences, were huddled close together, their arms on each other's shoulders with endearing intimacy, and who shall say that in this supreme moment joyful tears did not overflow from the youthful eyes of the young prisoners, thus so strangely re-united?

Juan was the first to break the silence. "Where is father, Jeff, and all the other Texans?" exclaimed the boy. The four answered almost in one voice:

"We haven't seen Jeff since we left Mier, you know he was there in the hospital, but we know of most of the other Texans; we were with them at El Salado where we drew beans for our lives."

“Drew beans for your lives,” exclaimed Juan in breathless amazement. “Oh! horrible! horrible!”

“Yes, it was horrible, but when Big Foot comes along we’ll get him to tell you how awful it was,” said Harvey.

“But your father, we think, is safe, for we saw him after he drew his white bean; but seventeen of our good men drew black ones, the white ones, you know, meant life, the black ones, death,” said Orlando.

“Captain Eastland drew the first black bean,” said Gilbert.

“Terrible! Terrible! such a good man!” gasped Juan.

“John, old boy, you’re lucky not to have been along, you would have had to draw too,” said Orlando.

“Say, John!” said Billie, “how did you get away down here?”

“How did I get here,” answered Juan. “Pshaw! That’s easy telling, I didn’t have any say so about coming, if I had, I’d a stayed right where I was in the hands of General Ampudia; if he had been my own father he couldn’t have been better to me. I was going to school, learning fast, had every comfort and luxury in Matamoras, stayed right by the General and he sent me to school in the care of an orderly every day, and in the evening the orderly would come and go back with me. The General took all this care

of me just because he was afraid somebody would do some harm to me. Although I couldn't keep my mind off you all and father and Jeff, still General Ampudia and all the officers were so good to me that I couldn't find it in my heart to complain. I guess I'd a been there till now, and maybe a long time for the General always called me his son, said he was going to adopt me, but the President heard about me, and so there was no getting around it, I had to obey orders. The General put me in the care of an escort, a captain, a lieutenant, and several soldiers; I was mounted on the prettiest little horse you ever saw, except Jim Dandy, that the General gave me, and a *burro*, on which were packed all my things. We started overland by way of Tampico and after many long days of travel we finally reached this capital, and here I have been for more than a month."

"About them fine clothes, John, where'd you get 'em? You're rigged up like a son of a Mexican Gran-dee, wish I could get hold of some such clothes, I'd wear 'em, you can swear to that, and be glad of the chance," said Billie.

The guards now made the motion to move on in the direction of the barracks, and as they did so Billie called out in a lively way: "Say, John, better keep a close watch, your father might come along any time."

Juan scarcely left the big door save to eat and sleep, hoping Billie's predictions might come true. A few

days after this, he was standing in the same spot straining his eyes up and down the street with the hope of seeing some more Texans. At last he was rewarded for his faithful waiting for a group of four old and haggard men were now approaching.

On the long overland march the older prisoners had worn no chains, but now on arriving at the Capital where the chances of escape were greater, the order was given that all prisoners both young and old should be manacled. They were passing the Palace, and the guards were preparing to place the leg chains on the men. Juan noticed this movement and his heart was in his mouth, for at this instant he discovered that the aged, haggard and forlorn prisoner upon whom the guards were about to fasten these links was none other than his own beloved father. In an instant he had fallen upon his neck, exclaiming: "Father! Father! Oh, my own dear father! Come at last to your boy!"

The guards stood aghast to see this beautifully dressed young boy looking like a young prince, weeping upon the neck of this aged prisoner. They could not believe there could be any relationship between the two.

The guards still holding the links ready to adjust them, called out, "Away, boy, we have our orders."

"This man is my father, you shall not put those chains upon him, I forbid it! I will go at once to the President."

The guards realized that this boy, staying in the Palace, must be of some importance, and so while Juan went flying as fast as his feet could carry him to find the President, they stood still to see what would happen next. Fortunately, as Juan was ascending the steps he met Santa Anna coming down the stairs, and with the utmost freedom from restraint or hesitation he exclaimed:

“Your Excellency! My father has arrived, he is down near the door, the guards had stopped to fasten the leg chains on him, I forbade it! I would not permit them to put the chains on my poor, old father. Oh! your Excellency, protect my father. You know my promise to mother; and father is pale and trembling, is sick and—and—I can’t do anything more, unless you will help me—.” The little fellow was shaking from head to foot.

Taking the boy by the hand in the universal Mexican custom, Santa Anna in a manner most comforting and reassuring said:

“*Vente conmigo, yo te ayudare,*” (come with me I will help you), and as the two walked along the courtyard, and were about to pass through the big door, the Dictator, in endeavoring to relieve Juan’s nervousness, said:

“*No tengas miedo hijito, ellos no le haran nada a tu padre.*” (Have no fear my little son, no one shall harm your father.) They were soon in the presence of Mr. Hill. After cordial greeting from Santa Anna,

an interesting conversation took place. Mr. Hill was sent to the best hospital where every attention and kindness was shown him, and Juan visited him every day, each time taking something dainty, which the good Doña Dolores had herself prepared for him.

Santa Anna kept himself advised of Mr. Hill's condition, and when he was restored and requested to come into his presence, Santa Anna at once turned to the subject near his heart, and told Mr. Hill that if he would consent to Juan's remaining in Mexico, and accepting an education at the best school or college in the country, there should not be one dollar of expense to him, but that he himself would enter him.

In a kindly, reassuring way, but still eyeing Mr. Hill with the closest scrutiny, Santa Anna said:

"If you consent to leave Juan here in my care to receive an education, he shall have the best we have, and upon the same terms as though he were a native of the country," and continuing, he said, "I will send you and your other son home in safety, as soon as everything can be arranged to that end."

So it was all settled, and arrangements looking to the completion of these plans went at once into effect.

Santa Anna had heard that four young boys had passed the Palace on the day before, and began to question Juan about them. He was calling over their names and when he said "Orlando Phelps," Santa Anna gazed eagerly at the boy, repeating over and over, "Phelps, Phelps, why that is the name of that

good and noble man at whose fine home near Velasco, Texas, I was an honored guest. Juan, bring that boy named Phelps to me at once."

Away went Juan to fulfill the request, and in a short time he returned, bringing with him a tall, dark-haired youth of delicate build, poorly clad, but with a strong, manly face, and a fearlessness of manner which added greatly to his charming personality—Santa Anna was simply leaning against one of the pillars which supported the tall ceiling of the room, and in the most informal manner, bade the boys come nearer. He began by addressing Orlando, saying:

"Juan tells me your name is Phelps, and that you are a son of Dr. Phelps on the Orizimbo plantation; is this true?"

"Yes, Your Excellency, I have the honor of calling Dr. Phelps father, and although I was a very small boy when you were at our house, still I remember you very well, indeed."

"Why, your father saved my life and in his home I was treated as a member of the family, and now my son, you must permit me to request you to come at once to this Palace and become the guest of my wife, Doña Dolores de Tosta and myself, for just as long a time as it may please you, and everything that is possible for us to do for you shall be done."

Orlando gazed with astonishment upon the Great Dictator, and began saying he was not situated so that he could come into such a splendid Palace. He

had been away from home a long time, and—and—

“Not another word, my young friend,” said Santa Anna, “I understand.”

Turning to an orderly, he directed that a room adjoining Juan’s be made ready for the young Texan to occupy. His own tailor was commanded to come at once and make the best clothes that could be procured, and they were to be completed immediately.

Juan and Orlando were now making preparations to go out for a stroll—it was the first time the former had put on his new clothes which Santa Anna had had made for him, and both boys were now making their toilet with much care, for they were to visit several places of interest in company with Augustin and Manuel Tornel and some of their Mexican boy friends.

“Billie is sick; I’m sorry he won’t be able to go with us and see the sights,” said Juan regretfully, as he watched Orlando carefully adjusting his cravat before the mirror.

Orlando was a philosopher, and his bits of wisdom helped Juan through many a vexing question. He pursed up his lips, and thrust out his chin, as he gave the final wrap to the voluminous tie, and turned his mind on the exact position of the brooch that held his shirt frill in place. This finished, he turned to put on his vest, a dainty, white corded affair with large pearl buttons, which added to the elegance of his costume.

"So am I," said Orlando briefly, as he gazed admiringly at the fit of his trousers that tapered so neatly to the little straps that held them close to the instep of his varnished boots.

Juan stared in astonishment at the elegant young man of fashion. Orlando was admiring his coat previous to putting it on, and we are sure he was enjoying in advance the pleasure of plenty of nice, clean, fashionably made clothing for the first time in many months, Orlando was enjoying it as no one who had not had his previous experience could do.

"Seems to me," he said, "I enjoy clean clothes more than I used to at home; when a fellow has had to carry a select and large assortment of vermin in his underwear, and knows that his trousers need patches all over, one might say, why—I tell you, old man, it's just sublime—to—to—have all this!" he waved his hand around at the luxuriously appointed apartment, and then glanced in the mirror at his faultless appearance.

Juan gave a satisfied glance at his own elegant attire, and though it wasn't the kind he'd rather wear, still it was truly handsome and he felt nice and looked nice in it. Big silver buttons adorned his short black jacket; double rows of tiny ones studded the outer seams of his trousers; and he remembered the silver braid that ornamented his neck; and then the silken red sash around his slender waist set off the shirt frill, and when he looked at his beautiful hat a flush rose

to his face, and he couldn't help a feeling of satisfaction at his appearance, but what awful things Billie would say!

"I don't believe I'll go," he said, "Billie loves to make fun of everything. I'd rather not go to see him now, he'll say we've both turned over to the Mexicans," said Juan.

"Oh, yes, you will go. We'll take our little dose of medicine like men, then we will go on our way rejoicing. Poor old Billie will have a real lonesome time. He don't mean half he says, and it relieves him to blow off steam," said Orlando. "Won't we catch it when old Billie sees our finery; I look like a New York dandy, but you are a Mexican from head to heels! *Lindo Caballero!*" said Orlando, fanning himself with one hand in imitation of the pretty senoritas he had seen in the Alameda.

"Billie is just wild I know," said Orlando, "to think Charley had been taken to Perote. He ain't even glad he is to go home, but declares he is going to ask the President to let him go to Perote and take Charley's place. You know the Captain is engaged to a lovely girl, and I reckon the day was set, for Billie is miserable about it. Poor Charley is caged for sure this time. They say that is the strongest dungeon in the world. Why, besides all the thick walls and that sort of thing, it has a big moat around it—."

"What's a moat?" interrupted Juan.

"A moat is a——er——er——a kind of a big ditch," said Orlando, desperately. "Juan, you sure better except His Excellency's offer. I never saw a fellow so anxious to learn everything. You can ask more questions. You are a regular catechism."

"Oh, well, I didn't know you minded answering them," said Juan flushing up.

"I don't when *I know the answer*," said Orlando, comically. "The trouble is you make me see what a lot I don't know. I'm going to study when I get home; but if His Excellency had made me the offer he made you——."

"What would you do?"

"I'd fall on his neck and hug him! I'd even unscrew his wooden leg!"

"I don't think it serews," said Juan, in a matter of-faet way, "I think it is strapped on."

"Why don't you ask him?" said Orlando, teasingly.

"I am afraid he might kick me with it."

"I don't believe his wife would let him. Dona Dolores is as much smitten with the idea of adopting you as he is."

"She is a loving lady. She is so good everybody loves her, and those that like him, think heaps of him," said Juan.

"And those that don't, *don't*. Just so. He is a wonderful man. Come on, and let's go see Billie, before we start out. You and I have little to grumble

about for you have a pretty good chance of getting your father and brother free. Certainly Santa Anna could not expect you to stay here as his son when your real father and brother were in prison. He would not even like you if you were that kind of a boy."

The two boys stepped out on the broad corridor that overlooked the patio. The trees rustled softly in the breeze, and the stone pavement below was checkered with lights and shadows. Through their waving boughs could be seen the servants lounging in their quarters. The stamping of horses' hoofs mingled with their voices and the harsh clattering of the parrots amusing themselves with the gymnastics favored of their kind. Many mocking birds in cages, and canaries were singing their sweet notes. The dogs stretched out lazily, were trying to snatch a little repose, and now turned to gaze at our young gentlemen as they passed, and flowering vines and shrubs, beautiful and strange were everywhere. In passing along the corridor, the boys unexpectedly came upon Doña Dolores with the ladies of her family. She greeted the boys kindly, chatted with them pleasantly, and Juan, who had acquired much Spanish, was able to answer her polite inquiries, as well as to return her courteous interest.

Orlando was much impressed by the kindness of both Santa Anna and his amiable wife toward Juan and himself and, while walking along, the conversation of the boys turned upon the offer of Santa Anna

concerning an education for Juan in Mexico.

"It's a great offer; yes, a remarkable one," said Orlando.

"But what will mother think of my not coming home," said Juan.

"Well, if you refuse to accept the President's offer, she may have to cry for three instead of one. I don't believe your father and brother would find prison fare a bit sweeter because you shared it. On the contrary, your father said to all of us that it lifted a burden of distress from his mind because he let you come on this expedition, when he saw Ampudia would not let you suffer the penalty. You better think it all over seriously before you decide that you won't accept," said Orlando.

"Father will settle everything for me before he goes home."

At this moment Juan recognized the carriage of the President in which were seated the President and General Tornel in their splendid uniforms. They both greeted the boys cordially, bowing in a friendly way till they had passed from view.

Juan was the first to speak, and turning to his companion he said:

"When the President was a prisoner in Texas he stayed at your house, didn't he? Your father pumped the poison out of him the time he tried to commit suicide. Say, don't it seem strange how things turn around, and that you should be here re-

turning the President's visit at your house, a prisoner in his hands, and he is trying his best to return the kindness of your family to him?"

"I was only a small child when all that happened, but I never thought then I'd be here in the palace of the President of Mexico, much less a prisoner in this country, but then we never know what's going to happen to any of us," said Orlando.

They walked from the plaza on to the street on which General Thompson lived, but before they could enter, the big door was opened by the *portero* (door keeper) and out came Billie walking slowly along; he had barely recovered from a dangerous illness. His first exclamation was:

"Boys, all the Texans are to be sent to Perote tomorrow morning, the order has just been issued, but I don't have to go—the President won't let me do a thing but go home. But I'd rather go to Perote—for you know Brer Charley is engaged to be married, and of course he can't when he is held a prisoner, but then you know we can't have our rathers in this country."

"Who told you this?" asked Orlando.

"General Thompson found it out and has just told me."

"I don't have to go for I'm going back to my dear old fadder and mudder, and you'll never find this chicken running around loose, trying to be a prisoner any more," said Billie.

"Well," said Juan, "I don't think we'll all have to go, here's three right here that won't, but I'm awful sorry that any of them will have to go, but it won't do for me to say a word, because I've already asked a lot of the President. I can't ask him not to send them there, but then it's kind of on the road toward Vera Cruz, and it will be a little nearer from Perote than from here, when they are all released and can go home."

The three boys now went along with Billie, discussing the prospects of the Texans for getting free.

General Waddy Thompson, in his "Recollections of Mexico," page 75, makes reference to Santa Anna's treatment of Orlando Phelps in the following words: "On the arrival of the prisoners taken at Mier, Santa Anna ascertained that there was one whose name was Phelps. He sent for him, and asked him if he were related to Dr. Phelps, of Orizimbo; the youth replied that he was his son. Santa Anna ordered that he should be released, had him brought to the Palace, and ordered many nice clothes for him. I was informed of all of this and as there was an American ship of war at Vera-Cruz about to sail to the United States, I wrote Santa Anna a note offering Young Phelps a passage. He replied, thanking me for the offer, but declined it, saying that he felt himself fortunate in having it in his power to return, in some degree, the kindness of Dr. Phelps to him when he was a prisoner in Texas, and that he preferred send-

ing his son home at his own expense; which he did, giving him also a draft on his factor in Vera Cruz for whatever sum of money he might ask for."



Orlando Phelps.

OFF
FOR HOME

CHAPTER XVIII.

OFF FOR HOME

BILLIE had urged upon Santa Anna the privilege of permitting him to go to Perote and stay as a prisoner in the place of his brother, Captain Reese. But Santa Anna steadfastly refused to allow the boy, who was just up from a bed of sickness, to do so rash and imprudent a thing. He had given Billie his freedom to go home, and not to become a voluntary prisoner.

General Waddy Thompson relates the incident concerning Billie Reese, as follows:*

“Billie said, ‘My brother, Charles, is engaged to be married; and besides this, I know that he would be much more useful to my father and mother than I would, and I should like, sir, to take his place as a prisoner, and let him go home. ‘In this,’ says General Thompson, ‘he was not acting a part; he spoke under deep excitement and with a glistening eye, and I do not know that this was the only moist eye in the room.’”

Billie had taken the well-meant advice of Santa Anna and gone home. Even if Santa Anna had granted Billie’s request it is doubtful if the gallant Captain Charles Reese would have accepted the sacrifice; he was the soul of honor, and must have suf-

ferred much distress because of having permitted his younger brother to come upon this hazardous expedition.

General Waddy Thompson was captivated with the artlessness of Billie's generous nature and did all he could to help the young Texan.

But Billie was gone, and like Saul, he breathed out threatenings and slaughters. Even Santa Anna was grimly amused, for he told a friend that he had said to this young Texan: "What is the use of freeing you Texans? You'll come right back to fight me." He was thinking of the previous lot of men of the Santa Fe Expedition. To his astonishment Billie answered promptly: "Yes, Sir, I suppose we will!"

Some little time after Billie's departure, Orlando bade farewell to Juan and the pleasures of the Mexican capital. General Santa Anna graciously gave him a permit to stop at Perote and see his less fortunate comrades. Billie too, had been given the same privilege and found upon arriving at the grim fortress that General Green and his brother, Dan Henrie, and John Twohig had an excellent scheme mapped out for their escape, and he might take the comforting assurance to his parents that they would soon see them all at home, and also that those of the boys who cared to risk it with them, could do the same thing. Orlando also was intrusted with this secret but the letters they gave him for the friends in Brazoria said nothing of the hazardous scheme. Though Orlando took along

the story of "the black beans," he was able to assure them that many friends were trying to secure their freedom.

In the letter he wrote to Juan he spoke little of their unpleasant situation, but he did remember to tell him that the moat was 200 feet wide, and twenty feet deep, and could be flooded with water in case of a siege. He also wrote that "the boys" celebrated the twenty-first of April (the anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto) by making an enormous egg-nog. "They had thirty dozen eggs, seven gallons of vino mescal, and as much asses' milk, and a big loaf of sugar. Colonel Fisher, Captain Reese and Lieutenant Clarke beat up the eggs, and Sailing Master Lyon pounded the sugar. General Green was in his element "bossing the job," and Dan Henrie warbled: I reckon he got some of the vino mescal without waiting for the trimmings. All the boys came in to help drink it. I suppose the Mexicans thought it was a Texan Saint day. Trimble got real gay and hooted like an owl, and they all were shouting out toasts. Dan Henrie sang a "Soldier's Tear," while the others sang something else at the same time. Can't you imagine the racket? They banged their old chains on the stone floors to keep time. Trimble goes by the name of "*Tecolote*" (screech-owl) among the Mexicans."

But full as the letter was, it told nothing of the plan for escape that the men had made. Orlando

was too wise to trust such a secret to the uncertainty of a Mexican mail bag.

Juan's father had by this time recovered and was growing more anxious each day to start home, so it was now the boy's time to make a move in the great game of chance in which he proved himself a skilled player. So without fear or trepidation he approached the ever grave, dignified, and seemingly unapproachable Dictator and said:

"Your Excellency, my father is now quite well, and is very anxious to go home. You have shown me great kindness—at first I did not realize how great that kindness was. I am only a boy and did not know what being a prisoner meant. Now, I know, I have seen my father, he is willing for me to remain and accept an education in one of your fine schools. You made me an offer. I did not know at the time what you were offering. Now that I have had time to study up your wonderful city I know a little more, and as I have always had a deep desire to get a good education, and father says it will be a long time before there are good schools and colleges in Texas, and as father is now ready to go—if Your Excellency will make the arrangements, he will start home at once."

Several prominent men were that morning present with Santa Anna, and every one turned upon this brave little hero.

"Your Excellency, if you will send my father at

once, I shall be glad to remain in Mexico and accept your generous offer of an education."

Without taking his eyes from the boy, Santa Anna said to his secretary: "Issue an order for the release of Señor Hill, send him sufficient money to meet his present expenses and see that when he is ready to leave for Texas he has safe escort to Vera Cruz and free passage on the first sailing vessel for a Texas port." A sigh of relief emanated from the interested group.

"When your brother comes, I will do the same for him. I will see your father and talk over your future. Now go to him quickly, *mi siempre hijito*" (always my son), and give him my compliments and tell him he is to go home at once."

The radiant smile that Juan gave his great friend seemed to cast a glow of good feeling over all, and the over-joyed boy hastened to obey the kindly order. He and the orderly had a joyful neck to neck race on the broad highway, that led to the hospital.

Out of breath Juan rushed to his father, telling him that he was to be sent home at once and Mr. Hill though overjoyed, gave the boy some wholesome advice which was gratefully accepted.

"You see, John," said Mr. Hill, "we are not going to be helped by our President for he says he sent General Somervelle to the border, and that we crossed over the river without his orders. Our men have not much chance to get free, for Santa Anna has just sent

the Santa Fe men home. Santa Anna says he will treat you like a son and after a while you may come home to see us all. You will have chances I could never hope to give you, for it will be a long time before Texas can have colleges. I know your mother will feel mighty bad not to see you come back, but she won't feel so bad when she knows all about it. She will be proud of you, and will want you to study hard and be a good boy."

If Mr. Hill had any doubts upon any points involved, he at least comforted Juan, who really liked his new surroundings, but his thoughts turned more upon his mother's disappointment than his own feelings. The thought that she would be glad of his opportunity to be educated removed his last regret, and he embraced his new life with cheerfulness and resolution.

Alone, but not friendless, he was the daily recipient of every kindness from those about him. His manly courage, his devotion to duty—and outspoken love of his own country, his graceful acceptance of the new conditions surrounding him, his amiability—and gracious charm and tact, united with a remarkable beauty of face and form, had made a deep and lasting impression upon his distinguished captor at Mier, and continued on to others of greater importance in the history of their country. Juan Christopher Colon Gil was a prisoner of the Mexicans, but it was in name only, for he possessed the innate qualities of mind

and heart which awaken admiration, and esteem with all nationalities, and the Mexicans were no exception to the rule, and so they became more John Hill's prisoners than he was theirs.

But few young boys could perhaps have trodden so successfully this narrow path, as did our young hero.

Within a fortnight Juan was informed that his brother with other Texans had passed through the city, but they were not permitted to stop, and were hurried on to the dismal prison of Perote. Under much excitement he ran breathlessly to Santa Anna whom he met as he was about to enter his carriage. He respectfully approached him, and after the usual courteous greetings he said: "Señor General Presidente, my brother passed through the city a little while ago, but was not permitted to stop, he is still suffering from his wound; I did not get to see him, but Your Excellency, will you not release him now and allow him to go home?"

Santa Anna assured the boy that he would do so, and at once issued the order and dispatched an orderly to notify the guards that Jeffrey Hill, the Texas prisoner, was to be released at once, and an escort be given, and clothing and money were at the same time sent him to defray his expenses to Vera Cruz, thence to his home in Texas.

JUAN'S LATER
CAREER

CHAPTER XIX.

JUAN'S LATER CAREER.

IN SEPTEMBER, 1843, Juan entered Mineria College and very happy he was, too, for now he had Augustin and Manuel Tornel for his daily companions. He found that he was in reality the third son of General Tornel, was blessed with "two nationalities," and did not have to fight either. He studied diligently, and the family in the farm house on the Colorado heard regularly from him and rejoiced that he was happy in his foreign surroundings.

In a year, by his good record in his studies and amiable manners, he was placed in charge of his dormitory, a much coveted honor among his schoolmates, and later on, he became professor of English in this great college, and on his marriage took up his life within the walls of this magnificent building. His popularity increased with years both with the boys and the professors. But on each Sunday afternoon, according to a promise made long before, he made his regular call upon General Santa Anna and his good wife, joining them in their drives or in meeting their friends and neighbors in the palace. To some it may seem strange that any influence, however strong, could be produced by this boy's natural enemies, which would induce him even temporarily to remain in Mexico and receive kindnesses and an education from

the greatest men of the time, especially from Santa Anna, and finally that his whole life should continue among these people. In gracefully accepting kindnesses from the distinguished men of Mexico, Mr. Hill did not relinquish his identity with Texas, and a boy with ideals so high could not fail to graciously acknowledge the continuous and unfailing attentions and interest of those about him, even if they did come from enemies of his country.

The unaffected kindness of the distinguished men into whose hands the boy fell, their great culture, ability, and their extreme considerateness of his loved ones, to say nothing of the charm of life among the Latins, captivated and held this young life under a mysterious and romantic spell. But, throughout his life, in mind, heart and spirit, John Christopher Columbus Hill was ever loyally devoted and attached to Texas. He was a member of the Texas Veterans' Association, and for many years, each year found him in attendance upon their meetings. He never failed to speak out in defense of Texas, not even when under the greatest peril himself.

When the American troops entered the city, young Hill found himself constantly employed in serving both sides. It was through his intercession that the American soldiers were removed from the Minera College. He was then eighteen, and manly beyond his years. Mexicans and Americans alike appealed to him. Priests came to him for the benefit of his



John C. Hill

English and help in many ways, until he was known and called by the nickname: *pano de lagrimas*'' which meant that he wiped away the tears from people's eyes; a very nice nickname, though the writer, when an old man who was eye-witness of many of Juan's kindly deeds told her about it; the old man was still living in the house near the Minera where he had a barber shop at the time of the American invasion.

The war made little interruption in Juan's studies and in 1850 he was graduated with honors as a mining engineer from the good school of the Minera. He was appointed to a fine position in the reduction works of the San Miguel Regla. From this on, he held one position after another, the best among the gifts of the republic, for good fortune ever attended his footsteps. For years at a time he never heard one word of English nor saw an American face. Would it not seem natural that the law of environment would overcome the force of early ties and impressions? The fact is notable, that though sharing the highest honors of the college with native Mexicans—a guest of the government receiving his diplomas just as if he were a citizen, he never renounced his allegiance to the United States nor to Texas—never exercised the right of franchise in either his adopted or his native land. The thought always remained, however, that he would return to Texas and resume his old relations among the scenes of his earlier years. This he attempted to do several times, but each time he returned to Mexico.

There were his strongest ties, his loved ones, his life's companions. He enjoyed the friendship of Mexico's greatest men. Saw his patron, Santa Anna, banished to grim Perote, and from his native land saw Maximilian's brief court rise and fall.

But again he was taken captive on Mexican soil. Love in the guise of a dreamy-eyed señorita, called to him, "*Rindan sus armas!*" "Surrender." The surrender was complete and instantaneous. He married a sister of Segrada, a noted painter, whose works adorn the walls of the Mexican art gallery.

Thirteen years had elapsed since he bade his mother and little sisters farewell, before he returned to them a man with a heart as loyal and loving as the dark-eyed lad who rode away on his pony on that fair Indian summer morning in September, 1842.

Thirteen years before he set forth as a soldier full of revenge, resolved to destroy or be destroyed; he returned to ask permission to wed a daughter of the old-time enemy.

He received his parent's blessings and returned to the City of Mexico. His happy married life was crowned with four lovely, beloved children.

The fact that his benefactor and friend, the great Dictator, Santa Anna, had been exiled and returned, and finally died in poverty and filled a pauper's grave; and that his good wife, Doña Dolores de Tosta, rests in the same grave in the cemetery of the Tepayac filled his mind with saddest thoughts. To these faith-

ful friends of his early helpless youth, the Boy Captive was ever loyal and faithful. In every way that lay in his power did he seek to ameliorate their helpless and saddened condition.

Having faithfully performed his sacred mission of "taking care of father and Jeff," the curtain goes down upon the life of a boy which should be an inspiration to all the young people who read this faithful story.

History records no greater triumph of precocious heroism. Charles XII, at eighteen, led the men who conquered Denmark; Fox entered the commons at nineteen, and Pope sang in numbers at twelve, but neither of them untutored and alone combines in a single act as did the young Texan hero, the courage of youth with the character of mellow age.

ADDENDA



Juan C. C. Hill, the Boy Captive, and his daughter and two granddaughters who were educated in the public schools of Austin, Texas.

ADDENDA.

A FEW words as to the fate of General Pedro Ampudia. In connection with the "Boy Captive of Mier," and for his great kindness to him, the name of General Ampudia will be remembered with interest. As General in command of a division, he capitulated to the American troops at Monterey in 1846, and in 1852 he joined Santa Anna in his "Plan de Jalisco," and remained with him until his (Santa Anna's) fall in 1854. He generally sided with the church party, and after the fall of Santa Anna he lived as a private citizen at his *hacienda* "La Soledad," in the state of San Luis Potosi, (now called Villa de Diaz Guiterrez). In 1862 he again joined the church party and incorporated himself with the forces of General Miramon to sustain the Empire; after its fall, General Ampudia returned to San Luis Potosi, and died there in the fall of 1864, or spring of 1865.

The friendship of General Ampudia for the boy captive remained to the last day of the General's life.

One of the incidents which speaks volumes for the gratitude of the Boy Captive for his distinguished captor at Mier, he related to the Author that a young brother of General Ampudia, who had also espoused the cause of the Empire was captured by the Mexicans and was sentenced to be shot. Juan heard of

it and at once determined, if possible, to save his life. Confiding in a lady friend who was in sympathy, they went at once to the prison where the lady exchanged clothing with the prisoner and Juan walked proudly out, for he had saved the life of young Ampudia.

TEXANS RELEASED FROM PEROTE.

Letters from General Ampudia continued throughout his life. Some of these have been read by the author.

When Big Foot and the other prisoners were released from Perote, says Big Foot, "A few miles from Jalapa we were stopped by a company of robbers on horse back, eleven in number, who demanded our money. We told them that we had been prisoners a long time, had just been liberated, and were not flush with money. They asked if we were Texans and if we had passports. I handed them mine signed by Santa Anna. They said Santa Anna was a scoundrel and wanted to know why the Texans didn't kill him while they had him. I told them that if I had had the keeping of him he would not have troubled Mexico any more.

"They offered to keep us company to Vera Cruz and protect us from further molestation. Night came on, they turned off the main road and conducted us to a large ranch or *hacienda* that appeared to be a sort of rendezvous for gentlemen of their profession.

When the robbers entered, the people in the house exclaimed: 'How are you Colonel? How are you, Major?' and other like expressions.

"Here an excellent supper was served and we were cordially invited to partake of it. A variety of fruit and excellent wine were placed on the table. I asked the robber chief if that was their usual style of living, and when he replied that it was, I told him if there was a vacancy in the corps, I should like to enlist. This pleased the robbers and they drank the health of the '*gringo*' in a full bumper. The next morning they filled our haversacks with provisions, gave us a half dollar apiece, escorted us back to the road and bade us *adios* with many expressions of good will."

When the Texans were recaptured after the affairs at El Salado, Big Foot thus described his own personal appearance:

"As for myself," said he, "I had worn from necessity the same suit of clothes I had on when we made our escape from the guard, and after traveling in them all this time over dusty roads and sleeping in them at night on the ground, it can be easily imagined my costume was not exactly suitable for a ball-room or a fashionable assembly. But little was left of my shirt, my hat had long since gone by the board, and in its place my head was partially protected from the sun by a red cotton handkerchief, wrapped around it like a Turkish turban. I had but one shoe left which was in a very dilapidated condition, and in lieu of

the other, a rawhide sandal strapped on my foot with leathern thongs. My coat was tattered and torn by thorns and like Joseph's, from frequent mending with all sorts of materials, was of many colors. The remnant of my pantaloons hung upon me in shreds that were bound together by thongs or strings—add to this a countenance that had been guiltless of a thorough cleaning, well, I am ashamed to say how long. Such a beauty did I grow that if my old sweetheart, Jenny Foster could have seen me, her heart would have relented and she would have reversed the cruel decision which sent me 'packing off' to Texas some years before.

One remarkable characteristic of this old pioneer was his ability under the heaviest trials, to see and enjoy the humorous side of everything. He relates an amusing incident of the occasion of the Mier prisoners being removed from one part of Mexico City to another. He said, "some of the lowest class gathered about them, old women, men and boys, and began calling out, 'down with the heretics,' and other like expressions, until at last the guard told the mob if they did not move on he would turn the whole 'Texas Cannibals' loose on them. The Texans understood what he said and to carry out the joke and make a diversion in our favor, three or four of us grabbed as many old women and boys who had ventured in our reach and made out we were going to eat them without salt or pepper. I clinched an old squaw who had

been making herself prominent and took a bite at her neck, but it was tougher than a ten-year-old buffalo, and though I bit at will—and can crack a hickory nut with my grinders—I could make no impression on it whatever."

"This unexpected demonstration on the part of the 'gringos' took the mob by surprise and they scattered like partridges, but we were molested no more that day."

True to the predictions of Santa Anna, the men of Mier who had been sent home did not fail to again enter the service of the United States and bear arms against their old-time enemy.

In reading the records of the war between Mexico and the United States, we find the names of many of our friends of the Mier Expedition. Billie and his brother, Captain Reese, fought with honor at Monterey, and we read that Gilbert Brush was wounded. Johnnie McMullen was an officer, as was our friend Big Foot Wallace. Dan Henrie Drake not only fought and was captured again, but ran away from a whole company in broad daylight, got back to his own company and came up bravely to meet the enemy again.

Captain Reese returned home and married the girl of his choice to whom he was engaged during the period of his imprisonment. His survivors reside in Brazoria County. Billie also married and emigrated to California, where he died in 1851, leaving children.

Orlando Phelps still resided at the home of his

early youth in Brazoria County, and left several children now living in Houston, Texas.

Harvey Sellers married and reared a family, and enjoyed a successful business career at Galveston.

All of these boys who were mere children at the time of this expedition, when Texas needed their help, developed into splendid men who were an honor and credit to their country. Sam Walker, the scout who was captured before the battle of Mier, returned an officer to revenge his old wrongs and died a hero's death on the battlefield at Monterey near the very prison where the Texans were confined when enroute to Mexico City.

On February 14, 1904, James Monroe Hill, the elder brother who gave John his rifle, died at Austin, Texas, at the age of eighty-five. Two days later, John C. C. Hill, the hero of this narrative, passed away at Monterey, Mexico, at the age of seventy-five.

It is very interesting to read of the wonderful regiment of Texas Rangers of which our old friend, Captain Jack Hayes, was the honored young Colonel. But the best friends must part and so we will say to all our brave comrades of the Mier Expedition.

“ADIOS.”

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AN
ARMISTICE

AN ARMISTICE.

During the Mexican War in 1848, and five years after the Mier men had been decimated, an armistice was agreed upon between the two contending armies. The American army was at Concepcion, the most advanced post of the army, and twenty men of General Walter P. Lane's command, knowing they were only about fifty leagues from the Haciendo de Salado, where on March 24, 1843, the Mier prisoners had been decimated, resolved to make the effort to exhume their remains and bring them to their own country. Five of the men drew beans at El Salado, and John Dusenberry and James Seely remembered the exact spot where their comrades had been buried. By forced marches they reached the spot, but the priests of the village and other important dignitaries bitterly opposed their removal, but finally the Texans carried their point. On reaching the spot they found a cross had been erected over their graves, and the ground had been consecrated.

The kind-hearted Mexican women kept the grave and the cross decorated with flowers and there they knelt and made their devotions. When the earth was removed and the cross fell, the cry of "*Por Dios*" or "Oh! God!" went around the circle. The remains, even to the smallest bone, were placed in sacks, put upon pack horses and by forced marches, they safely reached Concepcion. General Woll, the American

commander, made the offer of free transportation to Galveston and Mr. Dusenberry reached La Grange, Texas, in June 1848, this having been the point decided upon by the Americans for their final resting place. On September 18th of the same year, the Dawson men who fell in the fight at Salado Creek, six miles southeast of San Antonio, whose remains had been disinterred, were reinterred with the Mier men, and now rest on Monument Hill in La Grange. A monument was erected to them at that place and the State of Texas also erected another which stands in the court house yard, on which are suitable inscriptions telling of their brave and heroic deeds.

List of Texans decimated at El Salado, Mexico, March 25, 1849: L. L. Cash, James D. Cocke, Capt. Wm. Eastland, who went from La Grange, Edward Este, Robert Harris, Thos. L. Jones, Patrick Mahan, James Ogden, Charles Roberts, William Rowan, J. L. Shepherd, J. M. N. Thompson, James N. Torrey, Humboldt James, Henry Whaling, M. C. Wing, making seventeen in all.

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY.

Mr. Charles F. Lummis in his admirable book: "The Awakening of a Nation" has this to say in regard to our debt to the Castillian language: "With the ebb and flow of frontiers, the innumerable drift-wood of the Castillian tongue has lodged here, there and everywhere. And where it once came it was never forgotten * * * * * Two-thirds of the geographical names in the New World to-day, are of Spanish derivation, and the same linguistic tricks are abundant in every other walk of American life."

Remembering this, and the extensive Spanish colonial possessions of the United States of America, and the need of a more general knowledge of the Castilian language, we should find the study of a speaking knowledge equally one of profit and pleasure. With this end in view, the reader will find a brief summary of the pronunciation and glossary of a few groups of words, as well as the Spanish words and phrases to be found throughout this volume.

The Spanish language is spoken in the throat, not forward on the lips, and all words are deeply accented. Accentuation is as follows:

Regularly, on the last syllable of words ending in a consonant other than S and N.

Irregularly, wherever written accents occur.

The letters and combinations pronounced other than English are as follows:

i equals i always as in machine, o equals o always as in chaos.

i equals i always as in machine, o equals o always as in old.

u equals oo always as in food or u in rude.

i and u are weak vowels and when used together or in combination with a strong vowel form a diphthong which must be pronounced as a unit sound. Spanish c equals h before a, o, and u, c and s surd, i, e, last pronounced thin in Castile and other parts of Spain, but not in Mexico, Andalusia and practically all of South America.

g equals g hard as in gate before a, o, u, g equals h in hush, before i and e—h silent always. ll is written and considered as one letter in Spanish; pronounced like the English ll in million in Castile, like y in Mexico.

Below will be found the Spanish words with the English translations which will be found as they occur in the book.

La Huella de los Españoles—(The Footprints of the Spaniards.)

La tierra del Fuego—(Land of fire and heat.)

Firma—(Signature in handwriting.)

?Quien Sabe?—(Who knows.)

Alamo—(Cottonwood tree.)

Alcalde (Magistrate—a justice of the peace.)

Hacendado—(Gentleman who owns plantations.)

El Cantaro—(Water Bottle.)

Azotea—(House top.)

Feria—(A fair.)

Rindan sus Armas—(Lay down your arms.)

Rindanse—(Surrender.)

Pobricito—(Poor little fellow.)

El tiene mucho valor—(He has a great deal of courage.)

Mi hijito—(My little son.)

Queridito—(Dear little one.)

Hijito mio—(My little son.)

Plaza—(Park or open square.)

Hombrecito—(Little man.)

Hasta Luego—(I will see you later.)

Mozos—(Men servants.)

Quiero comprar vino—(I wish to buy wine.)

Ladrones—(Robbers or Bandits.)

Carretas de Rueda de Panocha—(Noisy carts with pancake wheels.)

Hacienda—(Plantation.)

Sombrero—(Hat.)

Gloria y gratitud (a'al) bravo Canales—(Glory and gratitude to the brave Canales.)

Eternal honor (a'l) Immortal Ampudia—(Eternal honor to the immortal Ampudia.)

Vivas—(Demonstration of delight.)

Centinela Alerta—(Awake and alert.)

Metate—(Flat porous stone on which corn and other household materials are ground.)

Mesón—(Country tavern or wagon yard.)

Escopetas—(A peculiar kind of gun.)

Chile—(Meat cooked with much red pepper.)

Tortillas—(Flat corn cakes made of corn meal ground on metate.)

Frijoles—(Beans.)

Adios mi hijito—(Goodbye, my little son.)

Adios mi niño—(Goodbye, my child.)

Dios te Bendiga—(May God preserve you.)

Del Muchachito Americano—(The little American boy.)

El Prisionero—(The boy prisoner.)

Zaguan—(Main hall of a house.)

Arzobispado—(Archbishop's Palace.)

Dios Viene—(God is coming.)

Niño mio.—(My child.)

Huevos—(Eggs.)

Arrieros—(Mule or donkey drivers.)

Lazarone's—(ragged lazy beggars.)

Muchacho—(Boy.)

Calle de moneda—(Street of money.)

?El Muchachito se siente un poco esta mañana?—(Is the boy a little sad this morning?)

No se apure más muchachito—(Don't worry any more now little boy.)

Vente conmigo, yo te ayudare—(Come with me. I will help you.)

No tengas miedo hijito ollos, no le harán nada a tu padre—(Have no fear my little son, no one shall harm your father.)

Doña—(A married lady.)

Lindo Caballero—(Handsome gentleman.)

Portero—(Doorkeeper.)

Pano de lágrimas—(Wiping away the tears from people's eyes, giving comfort to the distressed.)

Buenos dias Caballeros, nos gustan mucho los Americanos. Bien venidos! extrangeros! Bien venidos! —(Good day, Gentlemen, we like the Americans very much. Welcome, Strangers, welcome!)



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